

DEEP RED



NO. 6 MARCH, 1989

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BLEED BY**

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ART**
**DIRECTOR'S
FORUM**

**FOREIGN
GORE**

SPAWN 2

FantaCon 88

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**Cruelty,
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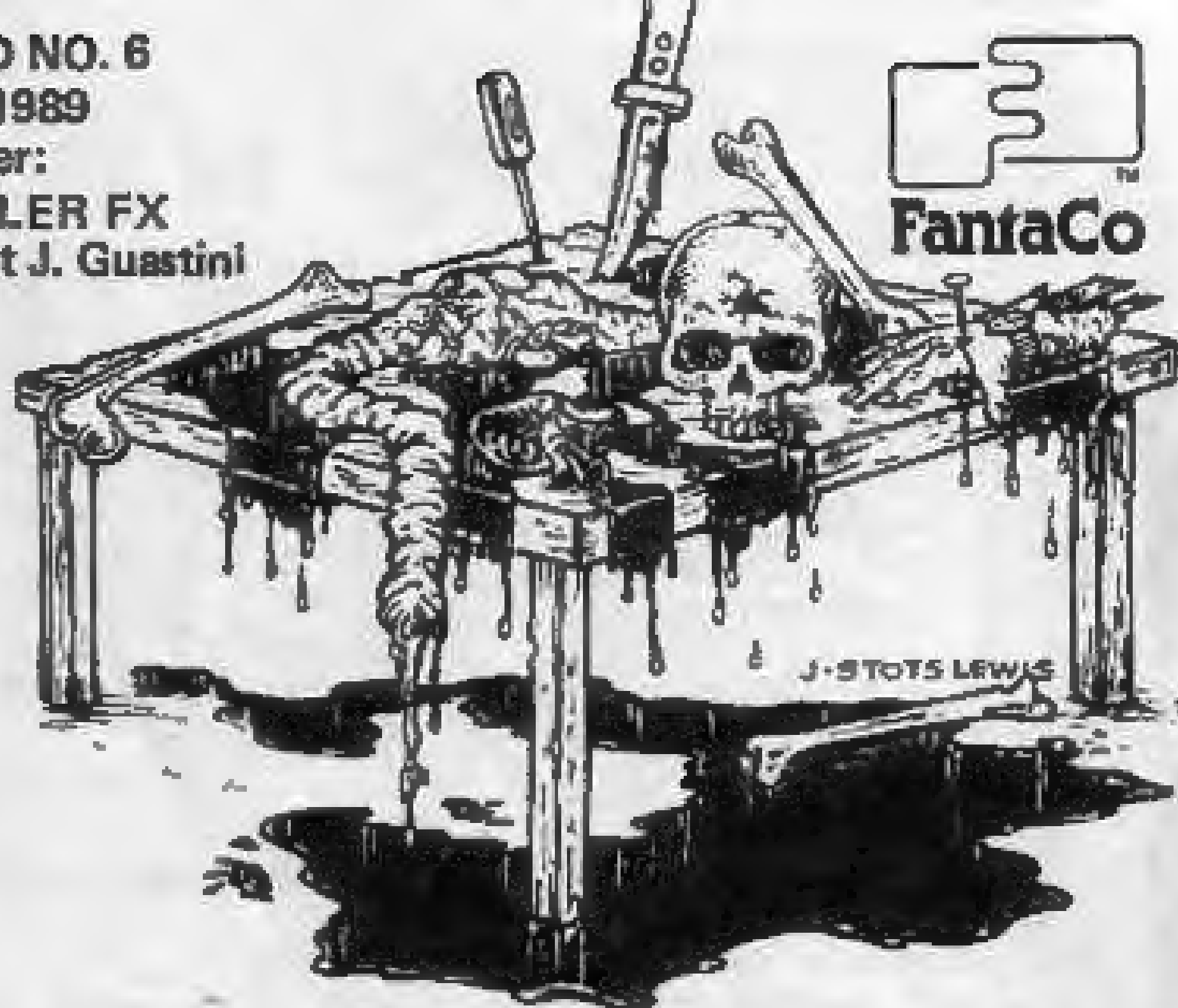
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MINDKILLER FX

By Vincent J. Guastini



FantaCo



REDitorial

Judging by comments and opinions expressed in this particular issue of DEEP RED (as well as others), the state of the Horror Nation is in peril. We all seem to agree we've been bludgeoned by bogosity, sickened by sequelitis, and bored by the banality of today's current crop of genre offerings. Well, fine, then. But, what to do? It seems we've all become critics (with your editor as one of the worst offenders) without offering up a counteroffensive. We've become content with the role of spectator; a well informed, astute, inventive and occasionally gifted one, perhaps, but a "watcher" just the same.

It's been said by more than one wag "a critic is a legless man who teaches running." (Ouch!) We have got to become part of the solution, bros; otherwise, we're part o' the problem.

The talent is out there; it just needs a little prodding to come forward. We can no longer afford to wait for the next Hooper, Dante, Cronenberg, Raimi, Craven, Carpenter or Gordon to come along and save the day. We're going to have to do it ourselves.

So, get started, kids. Write it. Draw it. Film it and believe it. We're a hyper-enthusiastic, devoted and oftentimes fanatical bunch who need to discover the hidden powers lurking within ourselves. Gustave Flaubert said, "Nothing great is ever done without fanaticism. Fanaticism is religion. It is faith, burning faith, the faith that works miracles." We've got the former in spades, my friends, but where is our faith? Must it always lie with others?

Let's show some fuckin' guts and paint this town RED...Deep, deep red.

Do it. Now.

The Radder The Better,

Chas. Balun
Editor

**YOUR FLESH WILL CRAWL
RIGHT OFF YOUR BONES.**

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Back Cover By Gurchain Singh

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Brad Shelladay's documentary feature on everybody's favorite buzzsaw movie is in the can and now available exclusively through DEEP RED (see ad inside cover). **THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE: A FAMILY PORTRAIT** features interviews with the principal cast members (including an hilarious and animated performance by Ed Neal impersonating Tobe Hooper), select footage from the film and additional commentary by Forrest J. Ackerman and yours truly.

Shelladay's proven himself to be a hail and hardy, dedicated, fiercely independent filmmaker who deserves our support. He got off his ass, raised the money himself and did something that 98% of us only dream and yammer about. The tape's very reasonably priced and certainly the last word on the "Gone With The Winds of Meat Movies." So, buy one, already. (And, no, I don't get a cut, you snide, cynical disbeliever.)

OTHER VIDEO NEWS - Tim Ferrante, writer for FANGORIA, FILMFAX, etc. and Vice President of Imagine, Inc. has just recently finished directing and producing **DRIVE-IN MADNESS: THE VIDEO**. Expecting more of a leering, Bill George style T-and-A show, we were pleasantly surprised to find an entertaining, crisply edited and engaging overview on the appeal of the Drive-In style exploitation film. It features candid commentary by a host of genre veterans including George Romero, Tom Savini, John Russo, Forrest Ackerman, Linnea Quigley and loads of others. And, the emphasis is less on horny and more on horror. Tim did a fine job with it and congrats are in order for the tremendous quality of the video transfer. The trailer selection offers up some choice rarities not seen in any other compilation and the video's a good deal at \$39.95 (plus \$2.50 postage) from Imagine, Inc., P.O. Box 9674, Pittsburg, PA 15226.

For those with less demanding tastes, there's always Michael Flores and the Psychotronic Film Society's homey **IT'S ONLY A MOVIE- THE VIDEO**. Made for under \$100, it features twelfth generation copies of Herschell Gordon Lewis' TV ads, numbingly bad garage band thrashings from the 3-D Invisibles, funky interviews and sorts bloody footage from Chicago's Splatter Theatre, a live gore-on-stage play. It comes with a warning too: This video contains scenes which should not be viewed by pregnant women or wimpel. All others should send \$14.95 and a couple of dollars postage to Michael Flores, P.O. Box 14683, Chicago, IL 60614-0683.

A tip o' the butcher's cleaver to Stuart Strutin and Panorama Entertainment for showing the balls to pick up a couple of feisty independents and release them unrated. **FLESH EATING MOTHERS** was recently shown at both the Boston Film Festival and the Chicago International Film Fest to favorable reviews. It's campy. It's cannibalistic and cultish as hell.

BEYOND DREAM'S DOOR (DEEP RED 4 and 5), a Lovecraft-inspired, surreal dream/demon flick, is ambitious, thoughtful and surprisingly well-produced by a dedicated cast and crew from the Ohio State University Film Department. **BEYOND DREAM'S DOOR** also boasts of an uncommonly literate script, fluid camera moves, striking Argento-esque lighting, stirring original music and enough of the red to satisfy this acknowledged goremonger. Write to Panorama Entertainment Corp., 125 North Main Street, Port Chester, NY 10573, (914) 937-1603.



A boo and a hiss to Troma for considering radical castration on **REDNECK ZOMBIES** (DEEP RED 2). Producer Ed Bishop and director Perl Lewnes (see Directors' Forum this issue) were both exasperated to hear of the imminent surgery and fear their film will run about 32 minutes after its guts are pulled out.



To offer an opinion, call or write Troma at 733 Ninth Avenue, New York, NY 10019 or (212) 757-4655 and tell 'em "THE REDDER THE BETTER."

SOUR GRAPES DEPARTMENT - Yah, I know, what happened to my proposed Splatter Epic of the Double Decade that I was braying about back in Issue 1? **BUTCHER'S PRIDE** (aka **PIECE BY PIECE, DEAD IN THE HEAD**), the film I was to direct and write with Gunner (Leatherface) Hansen, looks like it will be made by Gunner and others who've neutered the beast to suit their lame, pedestrian, chickenshit tastes. Gone are my contributions: the original story-heavy on sex, death, drugs, cannibalism, sodomy, surgical mutilations and gratuitous splatter. Make room for the PG-13 version featuring naughty yuppies, pasta-roller killings, Valley girls and a Twinkie eating creature. Enough to make you fucking barf out loud. Leatherhead only recently announced, "I'm producing a new film which is gonna be called **DEAD IN THE HEAD**. The theme is essentially yuppies gone bad. I wrote the screenplay last January. I did a draft and two revisions. It looks like Jeff (THE OFFSPRING) Burr is gonna do it. Linnea Quigley and Jay (HOLLYWOOD CHAINSAW HOOKERS) Richardson have both agreed to do it. I'm on the screen a few times. There's a creature, but he's a younger character. This isn't a starring vehicle for me. I'm more interested in producing and writing the screenplay." Gunner and the original producer thought my approach too extreme. They both admitted "they didn't like horror films" so I knew trouble was brewing. I ranted, raved and insisted that we go well over the top. I sort of got fired. They took my mutant baby from me and gave me 2 1/2% of the future net profits. Yah, right. Responsible parties involved are invited to take a flying leap onto a smokin' McCullough. I feel so much better now. There, thanks for listening!

SMALL CONSOLATIONS - Though your editor will not be directing soon, he will appear as a slime-sucking, heathen party guy in Brian (RE-ANIMATOR, FROM BEYOND, DOLLS) Yuzna's new film **SOCIETY**, which just wrapped principal photography in late October.

I was doing a set visit for FANGORIA when Brian asked if I'd like to suck up some slime and party down with Screaming Mad George's ultra-bizarre FX creature creation. Needless to say, he didn't have to ask twice. Details to follow.



FOREVER EVIL

The photos we've been receiving from the set of **DEADLY SPAWN II: METAMORPHOSIS** give solid indication that this pup could be the low-budget answer to Carpenter's FXtravaganza, **THE THING**. Produced by Ted A. Bohus and Scott Morette, directed by Glenn Takakjian, **SPAWN 2** offers an ambitious array of FX including: animation, miniatures, matte paintings, go-motion, claymation, opticals, buckets of blood and precious bodily fluids, transformations, a wonderblob, and a 9-foot tall beast that looks like it could really kick some ass. The crew includes Paul Reilly, Brian Quinn, Pat Shearn, Ron Cole, Vincent Gustin, Ken Walker (mechanics), Dan Taylor (animation/opticals) and Mark Sullivan.

Tim (**TRUTH OR DARE**) Ritter's **KILLING SPREE** (**DEEP RED 4**) has been picked up by New York's Films Around the World, Inc. and should be in stores by Christmas. Way to go, Tim.

I attended an exclusive screening of the uncut version of **TROMA'S WAR** with Charles (**MOTHER'S DAY**) Kaufman and six or seven others just recently in a posh sound studio in West L.A. And, the verdict? Well, it's noisy, irreverent, sexist, violent, stupid, predictable, offensive and crass. Yet, it's not without a unique, vulgar kind of boneheaded charm. We were deafened by the nearly continuous gun battles and explosions, semi-dazzled by the sorts of spectacular stunts, and happy as shit to see our ol' bud Peri (**REDNECK ZOMBIES**) Lewnas get major billing as an FX supervisor, second unit director and actor (he plays five or six different guys). **WAR** is actually pretty darn good (by Troma standards), and boasts of some pretty lush production values, good action sequences, a likeable enough cast and a mean streak of black humor that (when it's not patently offensive as in an unconscionably repellent AIDS rape scene) is downright funny as hell (stay until after the credits for a neat bonus joke).

J.C. Matalon, whose grisly work in **FOREVER EVIL** (see photo) endeared him to natal massacre fans everywhere, is in Hollywood now, turning a vacation into a work stint with Rick Baker on an unnameable project (it's **GREMLINS 2**). The kid also runs Nightmares International, a mail order house for horror props, FX makeup, appliances and supplies. His catalog is incredibly thorough and it looks like you could buy everything you'd need for a low budget splatterfest for less than a couple hundred bucks. Send him a few dollars for his jumbo, heavily illustrated catalog at 2615 Waugh Drive, Suite 255, Houston, TX 77006 (713) 881-8051.

Former **DEEP RED** slumner Bruce Spaulding Fuller (**DEEP RED 3**) moved out West last month to work with some awfully big names (Warren Beatty, Mark Shostrom, John Cagione, Doug Draxler, Kevin Haney (Dick Smith's assistant)) on Beatty's **DICK TRACY**. Bruce will never be able to return home to Schenectady, NY after he shows off his portfolio around town. Got talent to burn, that boy. We're all proud of ya, Bruce. Knock us out, dude!



PLAYING FAVORITES - Congratulations to Rod Sims' swell 'zine **THE GOREFEST** for celebrating a recent anniversary. Rod delivers, month after month, with up to fifteen reviews of current and obscure theatrical and video releases that are always of interest to any dues-paying gorehound. A well-spent \$10 for ten issues to Rod Sims, 10026 Hawkins Court, Indianapolis, IN 46229.

Two other U.S. 'zines to look for which offer witty, insightful, and sometimes blistering genre commentary and come with a hearty **RED** recommendation are: Michael Gingold's **SCAREAPHANALIA** (\$7.50 a year to Gingold, 55 Nordica Drive, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520) and Steve Puchalski's **SLIMETIME** (\$3 for six issues) to 1108 East Genesee Street, No. 103, Syracuse, NY 13210. Nice work, lads. Keep the faith!

Our favorite European 'zine is unhesitatingly John Gullidge's excellent **SAMHAIN**. Right now, send him four bucks and get ready for a delightful surprise. **SAMHAIN** is kinda like **DEEP RED**'s British counterpart and their coverage of the European splatter scene is unparalleled. **SAMHAIN**, 19 Elm Grove Rd., Topsham, Exeter, Devon EX3 0EQ. A four star **RED** recommendation.

SPAWN 2



4E 2B 72 - Me and the Mrs. have been invited to Fory Ackerman's Thanksgiving Birthday Brunch Buffet and will extend **RED**'s good wishes on behalf of all our readers whose lives have been touched by this warm, generous, good-hearted man. Thanks for sharing your magic with us, Fory.

And now, **EUROGORE** from across the sea -

DEEP RED's intrepid Italian correspondent, Max Della Mors, files this report.

"Funnier Than 'PLATOON'"
—Troma Times
Uncut, Unrated... Unbelievable!!!



ZOMBIE 3 was released for a brief two week run to lousy reviews. Lucio Fulci abandoned the set due to ill health and the film was completed by Bruno (NIGHT OF THE ZOMBIES) Mattei.

Ruggiero (CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST) Deodato has completed **UN DELITTO POCO COMUNE** and is now directing **RAGNO GELIDO** (WHITE, COLD SPIDER).

Shockumentaries like **NATURO CONTRO** (NATURE AGAINST) and **MONDO CANE 2000 - L'INCREDIBILE** are attempting a comeback, but no one seems to care.

Umberto (CANNIBAL FEROX) Lenzi's **LA CASA 3** is about a haunted house, a demonic little girl and her hideous doll and is now available in the U.S. under its export title, **GHOSTHOUSE**.

Anthony Ascat (GIULIANO CARMINEO) directs David (THE BEYOND) Warbeck and Janet (GATES OF HELL) Agren in a new shocker about a strange house inhabited by werewolves. (No title at press time.)

Anthony Richmond's (Tonino Ricci) **LA NOTTE DEGLI SQUALI** (NIGHT OF THE SHARKS) is another **JAWS** style rip-off also starring Janet Agren.

Director Giovanni Arduino's first film, **MY LOVELY BURNT BROTHER**, features morphine-addicted burn victims, toxic zombies, blood orgies and fatal dental surgeries. Director Arduino describes his film as "extremely sick and gory, shot on 16mm with an incredibly low budget—under \$80,000...and I mean WAY under." Troma has already expressed interest and reportedly will release the film in Japan to test reactions.

Max also reports that Jorg Buttger's **NEK-ROMANTIK** (see exclusive review in **Gore Scoreboard**) is "the sickest movie I've ever seen." Our reviewer agrees.

The new Dario Argento movie may be called **UNDICI** (ELEVEN) and is reportedly about voodoo and witchcraft in the Caribbean Islands.



Luigi (ALIEN CONTAMINATION) Cozzi's two most recent films were released direct-to-video in Italy—**PAGANINI HORROR** and **WITCHCRAFT**, starring Linda Blair.

Lucio Fulci has announced a shitload of new projects including: **NEVER HURT CHILDREN**, **REMEMBER DOCTOR JEKYLL**, **BLOODY PSYCHO**, **IS ANNIE REALLY INSANE?**, **THE BROKEN MIRROR** and **THE RED MONKS**. How many of these will ever see the light of the projector beam is, of course, another matter altogether.

ACHILLE MANZOTTI
presenta

LA CASA 3

GHOSTHOUSE

regia di HUMPHREY HUMBERT

For further details on the Pastaland Splatter Platter may we suggest you send \$5.00 to Max Della Mors, Piazza Tripoli, 7, 20148 Milano/Italy and pick up a copy of his 'zine Gorezilla.

Meanwhile, our Dutch correspondent, Hennie Vredevaldt, has met with German director Jorg Buttgerreit and both are attempting to send video copies of HOT LOVE and NEKROMANTIK to the RED headquarters. We'll keep ya posted. Sounds like his NEKROMANTIK is still the sickest movie anybody has ever seen. Yum. The controversial film recently played in London at the Shock Around The Clock horror festival alongside HELLRAISER 2: HELLBOUND.

Hennie has also met with director Fabio Salerno and has meaty words of praise for both ARPIE and OLTRETOMBA: BEYOND. Hennie describes ARPIE as "very good, with a strange, weird atmosphere and a good story about junkies, drugged with a kind of hyper-heroin, who turn into slaughtering, rampaging street zombies...great guts!"

Finally, British correspondent John Martin (who profiled John Morghan last issue) is trying to launch an Argento fan mag and appreciation society and invites interested parties to write him in care of Mark Lingwood, 105 Elder Avenue, Wickford, Essex S12 0LR, England.

That's all folks. Stay scared...until next time.

BRUCE SPAULDING FULLER



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by Dale Pierce

SUSPIRIA

**Music To
Bleed By**

First coming to attention in the early 1970's, the Italian group Goblin managed to succeed in two different realms of the music world, both as a popular rock group and as a composing team for various horror films (particularly those of Dario Argento). Like Ennio Morricone, who will be forever remembered as a composer of western scores (although his works have covered all categories of film), Goblin will be fondly recalled foremost for their contributions to the world of splatter films. Since the group has been disbanded, their presence is even more sorely missed, although they are still around working as individuals.

To be certain, Goblin was unique, offering a strange assortment of chimes, groans, unharmonious, garbled sounds and high-pitched wails with tremulous, blaring, heavy metal music. While the two seemed incompatible together, the arrangement worked, not just once, but repeatedly. Looking like throwbacks to Woodstock, the longhaired hippies known collectively as, Claudio Simonetti, Massimo Morante, Fabio Pignatelli, and Agostino Marangolo completely captivated Europe, then with the film *DEEP RED*, the world. Marangolo was the drummer and percussion expert;

Morante the guitar; Simonetti the organ, piano, and string instruments; and Pignatelli the precision instruments. Composition was a team effort.

Even though Goblin itself is no more, many of their albums may still be found in the soundtrack or import sections of large record shops. Most of their films are also available on video; so those of you unfamiliar with their weird brand of music are still able to check them out with relative ease. They are well worth the listening pleasure (picture the strange scores of Ennio Morricone or John Carpenter with a Pink Floyd rock beat and you get some initial idea of what they are like). For the uninformed, a list of their best efforts in the horror line follows.

DEEP RED - A release made by Dario Argento prior to his *THREE MOTHERS* series, this psycho story involved David Hemmings trying to track down a hatchet-swinging killer (revealed to be an old woman at the end, who aptly gets beheaded herself). Argento, who had made a habit of using Ennio Morricone to score the films he'd done earlier, used Goblin this time around. From the onset, when the opening credits came on amid a blood red background, people were fas-



inated. The strange, instrumental hard rock seemed inappropriate at first; but it blended well with the mood of the film as the story progressed, rising and falling with the action. The group proved their variety; for along with their ear-splitting rock scores, they also played a childish lullaby type of melody, enhanced by voices of choirboys and chimes. Whenever

SUSPIRIA



DARIO ARGENTO

PHENOMENA



Tollman

Dario Argento

Goblin back for **TENEBRAE**, a psycho-killer story involving a razor-slicing, woman-hating maniac at loose in Rome. Since the plot was somewhat similar to **DEEP RED**, so was the music. Loud, blaring rock scores at the beginning, end, and in-between sequences where the killer arrived on the scene; an annoying flashback theme, which (instead of the choirboy song from **DEEP RED**) offered an assortment of strange sounds, much like a worn out music box; and heavy reliance on keyboards made this a classic in European slasher films. The poetic, flowing music matched well with Argento's poetic, flowing spurts of blood. As in his other works, the Argento/Goblin connection was a marriage made in heaven.

PATRICK - In the United States the greatest controversy surrounding this film, which dealt with a comatose villain who possessed psychic powers, was not whether it was any good or not but exactly who composed the score. While the American version of the movie credited music to Brian May (as did a soundtrack album), a series of records came out in Italy, which were imported into the USA, carrying the same logo and film credits, except with Goblin listed as the composing artists. This mystery of duo composers took quite some time to answer, although the explanation was simple. Italian distributors reportedly did not like the soundtrack accom-

panying the original film (keep in mind just how heavy the emphasis on film scoring is in Italy with the likes of Ennio Morricone, Francesco De Masi, Nino Rota, Nora Orlandi, Bruno Nicolai, and such enjoying more popularity than many actors or directors). Thus, Goblin was hired to rewrite the score and their adaptation was used throughout Europe in places where Patrick played. Rather bland as compared to **SUSPIRIA**, **DEEP RED**, and so on, this was not one of their best musical scores.

BURIED ALIVE - An absolute shocker, combining a psychotic killer with a mother fixation and a liking for dead bodies, with bringing stiffs back to life via a shot (as would later be seen in **RE-ANIMATOR**), this film received little play in the USA until it came out in video form. The heavy metal, typical Goblin score blended well with the heavy duty violence of the film. The chimes, the hypnotic rhythm, the odd assortment of Morricone-type sounds all molded and shaped to cause the right effect at the right time. In all, the film score was better than the actual film.

While the aforementioned are the major horror films scored by this group, others exist which offer equally interesting musical highlights, but have far less impact on the fans of splatter. These include:

CREEPERS - A more recent chiller by Dario Argento, which featured Jennifer Connelly, Donald Pleasence, and a host of killer bugs. Goblin only composed a portion of the music for this utilizing instrumental scores, heavy rock music and chimes as in **SUSPIRIA** and **DEEP RED**. Other musicians and bands involved with this flick include Simon Boswell, Motor Head, The Andi Sex Gang and Bull Wyman. As with **BURIED ALIVE**, the film soundtrack was better than the actual film.

STORIES TO KEEP YOU AWAKE - Only sparse information is available. Evidently, this was an Italian television program like "Night Gallery" or "The Dark Room," called "Sette Storie Per Non Dormire." The theme song they composed, aptly titled "Yell," was a big hit as a single and sold on 45's throughout Europe.

WAMPIR - By accounts, a vampire flick that may or may not have been released in America under a different title. Only one song from this film has been released in record form, "Roller," which has appeared on various Goblin albums. Regrettably, this correspondent has been unable to find other details. The title song is indeed chilling. It starts off with the **DEEP RED/SUSPIRIA** rock sound then stops and an organ solo is heard, like something out of the Haunted Mansion ride at Disneyland, before the song comes

"flashback" sequences were shown, this irritating "jump rope" music would be heard, grating on your nerves, but creating unbelievable tension.

SUSPIRIA - With the positive effect Goblin had upon **DEEP RED**, Argento reused the boys for **SUSPIRIA**, the first of his Mothers myths, involving witches at a German dance academy. The opening song, heard throughout, consisted of weird chimes (few people noticed the melody to be a twisted version of the old children's church song, "Jesus loves me this I know. For the Bible tells me so...") creating subliminal messages within the brains of the viewers and making them all the more aware of "something evil" in

the dance hall, even before the killings and Satanic rituals start. In this masterpiece, a hissing "devil voice" is also heard at points "singing" in time to the music with a wicked La-La-La-La-La-La-La. Added background voices, dubbed into the score (possibly a tactic copied from Ennio Morricone or suggested by Argento) include a repeated cry of "witch!" and the "devil voice" muttering barely audible blasphemies about Jesus Christ. The tone of this powerful main theme, one of Goblin's most popular creations, completely overshadowed all other lesser pieces of music in the film.

DAWN OF THE DEAD - The Dario Argento/George Romero slaughterfest about a group of humans making a last stand against the rest of the world, which has become a zombie-infested snake pit (**ZOMBIE** was the original title of this film in Europe), makes for plenty of gore, spills, and thrills. Goblin is right there again, only this time they get to show a wide variety of musical scopes and talents. The album is still circulating in some stores. The film score ranges from a slow, ambling march at the beginning and end to match, presumably, the walk of the lumbering undead scattered throughout the movie. Other variations include a slow saxophone melody during

When was the last time you were
REALLY SCARED!!!?

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JAWS

Now there's
DEEP RED



A Dario Argento Film
DEEP RED

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Executive Producer Claudio Argento, A film produced by SALVATORE ARGENTO for SEDA SPETTACOLI
Story by Dario Argento and Benvenuto Zappalà, Director of Photography Luigi Kuveiller
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When there's
no more room in **HELL**
the dead will walk the **EARTH**

First there was
**"NIGHT OF THE
LIVING DEAD"**

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OF THE
DEAD**

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Creative and Photography: **WILLIAM GORRICH**, Music by **THE GORRICH** with **DARIO ARGENTO**
Produced by **RICHARD P. RUBINSTEIN**, Screenplay and Directed by **GEORGE A. ROMERO**
DOLBY DIGITAL, MARLIN'S BOOK, TELEVISION, CINE ASSOCIATES, INC., PRESENTS A LITTELL FILMS PRODUCTION

romantic moments; a lampoonish Keystone Kops type of melody for when a group of bikers are picking off zombies and even hitting some in the face with pies; and, overall, only remote similarity to the pounding songs heard in previous credits. Certainly this would be the film in which Goblin showed the audience its wide variety of composing talents.

TENEBRAE - While Argento used Keith Emerson for **INFERNO**, he had

to a close with the rock melody resuming. Wild, to say the least, and unfortunately more details haven't cropped up about the film.

During Goblin's reign there were other film scores and monumental works not related to the horror category but, nonetheless, effective. These scores include SQUADRA ANTIGANGSTERS, a crime drama which used disco beat music for most of the scenes where music was required and I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU NOT, a tear-jerker starring Maximilian Schell, Terrence Stamp, and a then-unknown Jacqueline Bisset.

In summing up, fans might be unaware of the Goblin logo (a demon in a

crouching position playing on a violin) and what it means. This symbol, adorning their records and merchandise, came from an old painting titled The Devil And Tartini, based upon a European horror tale. Supposedly, the devil appeared one night, slouching over the bedposts of this man named Tartini, playing a violin. As the story has it, the devil wished this man to realize he could become a great composer and thus should take up music as an art. How the story ends is beyond me.

Whether or not the members of Goblin saw the devil at their bedside playing a guitar or set of chimes in like fashion is not known, but the greatness

they achieved in the world of horror film, with or without Satan's help, goes without saying. It is only hopeful that one day they will band together again, particularly if Argento finally puts together the final part of his Three Mothers series, sending The Mother of Tears on a terror spree through Rome. If such ever transpires, than no one better than Goblin could conceivably give her music to create mayhem to as she goes about making life miserable for mankind.

Hopefully, Argento will take the hint!



Fighting, killing, maiming,
agent orange and torture cages
were the easy part!...



DIRECTORS' FORUM

Three Filmmakers Spill Their Guts

REDNECK ZOMBIES

Tobacco Chewin', Gut Chompin', Cannibal Kinfolk from Hell!

WARNING:
REPEATED VIEWING OF REDNECK ZOMBIES
HAS BEEN SHOWN TO CAUSE INSANE LAUGHTER
IN LABORATORY ANIMALS

BY CHAS. BALUN
DENNIS DANIEL

Our editorial policy at DEEP RED has always been to encourage and promote independent genre filmmakers, and it has been our pleasure in the past to introduce many new and unheralded directors, writers, illustrators and FX artists whose work has showed future promise. In keeping with our tradition of spilling the New Blood, we conducted the following interview with three DEEP RED alumni whose experience and commentary should provide many a reader with an insight into the low-budget filmmaking process. They've all been there, from the beginning to the bitter end. And, it's not easy, folks.

Besides their from-the-trenches reports, our trio of filmmakers also discussed in colorful detail a far-reaching number of subjects ranging from Stanley Kubrick, prosthetic asses and zombie films, to censorship, studio interference and the **PIG FUCKING MOVIE**. Each of the directors also tries to assess just what is wrong with today's current crop of horror offerings and what the future holds for independent genre filmmaking. We hope you'll find some of their responses enlightening, provoking, perverse, or just plain funny.

Dennis Daniel and I conducted this interview at his home in Long Island, New York. We would like to once again extend our thanks to each of the directors who gave so freely of his time.

Now, for a short introduction of the participants:

PERICLES LEWNES - Director of **REDNECK ZOMBIES** (DEEP RED 2). Has just completed work on both **TROMA'S WAR** and **TOXIC AVENGER 2**, serving as a Supervisor of Special Effects, Director and Actor.

NATHAN SCHIFF - (DEEP RED 5) Outspoken provocateur, Godzilla enthusiast and the man behind **WEASELS RIP MY FLESH**, **THEY DON'T CUT THE GRASS ANYMORE** and the **LONG ISLAND CANNIBAL MASSACRE** offers pointed opinions on everything from horror-comedies, Corman films and **THE KILLER SHREWS**, to the wanton and wholesale destruction of massive amounts of real estate in the service of art.

Nathan's latest film, **VERMILLION EYES**, will be covered in our next issue.

PERI LEWNES OPENS UP



BUDDY GIOVINAZZO (DEEP RED 3) wrote, produced and directed the much-acclaimed cult hit **COMBAT SHOCK** and penned the screenplay for the upcoming theatrical release, **DEAD AND MARRIED (SHE'S BACK)**. Buddy has also written and produced several music videos and short films including **JONATHAN OF THE NIGHT**, **SUBCONSCIOUS REALITIES** and **LOBOTOMY** as well as directing the promotional reel for Joe (MANIAC) Spinelli's proposed sequel, **MANIAC 2: MISTER ROBBIE**. Buddy is currently teaching a filmmaking class at a local university and has several scripts in various stages of production.

RED Why aren't horror films scary anymore? What's the deal with the new crop?

BG I'll tell you the truth, I don't see 'em as much as I used to, primarily cause it's sequelization and bullshit. It's formulaized. When I was a kid, horror films used to work as nightmares they brought out all the fears you had as a kid. Nowadays, they play it too safe.

NS They're making crappier movies now.

BG Horror films to me today are like Stanley Kubrick's **FULL METAL JACKET** and **CLOCKWORK ORANGE**. They aren't trying to frighten you anymore. What they're trying to do is shock you, then make you laugh. There is no fright in today's hit; it's just shock. We know what Freddy Krueger is going to do, nobody's going to be afraid of him anymore. We go in to see the FX, to hear the funny lines.

NS You ask anyone and they say Freddy Krueger's a hero, no one's afraid of him anymore. Every other line is a joke; he's doing jokes. There are no horror movies anymore; they're all horror-comedies. Even **RE-ANIMATOR**, which is a fantastic movie, was still a comedy. They blew it with the head being carried around. It's joke time.

PL All of the movies coming out today are geared for kids, like big cartoons and not very good cartoons. There haven't been many films that scared the shit out of me.

NS Today, it's in the script, no one knows how to write screenplays anymore. That's why these films are so poor. Compare current scripts to Roger Corman's films for AIP. Any one of those scripts from Chas. Griffith and AIP has more intelligence than a hundred films from both Troma and Empire put together. I mean, **ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS** and **NOT OF THIS EARTH** were intelligent movies and they delivered in the exploitation department. Today, we live in a society weaned on television. You've got a problem with a film about a blob that costs \$15 million

COMBAT SHOCK



PERICLES LEWNE



BUDDY GIOVINAZZO



or \$12 million for a film about a werewolf. And, they're not even good films.

RED What have you seen recently that showed some merit?

BG **HELLRAISER**—it was really great until the ending. The ending was typical of the kind of stuff they're making these days. **HELLRAISER**, if anything, should've had a damn great script. From what I understand, Barker had a lot of fights with New World over the ending.

RED Why is that?

BG Because they wanted to hedge their bets. They're afraid of anything new that hasn't been done before. **HELLRAISER** had this happy ending which just sort of blew it apart, it was inconsistent with everything we'd seen prior to it.

Have been ripped off
with films that were
never released theatri-
cally

In the '60's and '70's when you just went out and filmed on your own, you were able to do what you wanted. You could have a bad ending, a down ending. It would ring truer. You know me, I'm partial to a down ending. You got to admit, though, I eliminate the sequel.

RED Horror films have almost become like fast food franchises.

NS Look at the marketing/advertising for films being released on video. You look at the box for David Cronenberg's **THEY CAME FROM WITHIN** and

it says, "from the makers of GHOST-BUSTERS." Everything has to be contemporary. That's where the talent is. There's more talent going into the box art than anything else.

RED: How about the guys who write the synopsis on the back, they're as adroit as any airbrush specialist. You, as filmmakers, what do you do to counter that trend?

BG: Do the opposite of what everybody expects you to do. I don't necessarily want to make horror films, I want to make films that are horrifying. For me, there's a clear definition. I like to do what's different by trying to subvert whatever the audience is expecting and make it true to the characterizations. Character is really more important to me than having somebody's arm cut off. I wanted to do *AMERICAN NIGHTMARES* opposite from expectations. That's why everything in the film goes wrong right up to the guy tying his shoes. He's got holes in his sock, he breaks the shoelace.

NATHAN SCHIFF



NS: That's when I knew the film was going to be good.

RED: Pen, how did *REDNECK ZOMBIES* come about?

PL: My partner, Ed Bishop, and I decided we wanted to make something that had something in it for everybody, something to turn their crank, get a reaction. I wanted a little of everything thrown in—hand-held cinema verité, some really straight, static shots.

RED: Nathan, how do you assess your filmmaking technique?

NS: It's a progression. I made three pictures that I call legitimate. It wasn't until the third one that I started thinking about other movies and how

TROMA'S WAR



terrible they were. So I just said, "Let's just try to shock people." That's what I was doing with all those movies, they were just "shock" pictures.

RED: You shoot in Super 8 with sound which is a bit different from Buddy's and Pen's experiences.

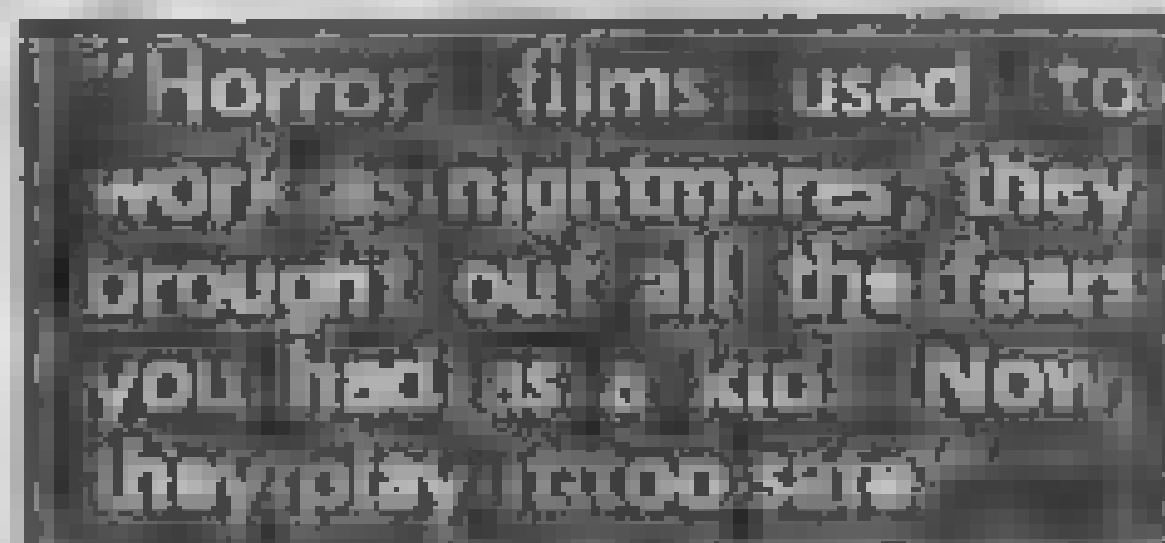
NS: Glorious Super 8—make that distinction. It's hard. I have non-actors and non-actresses and nobody to help. I do everything with limited equipment. You go through this huge process to come out with something so small. Then what can you do with your product?

BG: I shot *COMBAT SHOCK* on 16mm. I started out like Nathan on Super 8 films, my first five films were Super 8. I used it to learn editing techniques and constructing shots. You could only go so far, though, with the medium. To me, the sound is as important as the image and Super 8 only allowed for two tracks for sound, with 16 or 35 you can have 120. In some ways, though, Nathan is closer to what I really want to do because he just gets his money and equipment and shoots whatever the hell he wants. He doesn't have to answer to anybody.

I'm dying to shoot in 35mm, I never have. See, I shot *AMERICAN NIGHTMARES* for \$40,000. Troma told me to tell people I'd shot it for \$1.5 million. All of the \$40,000 was my money except for \$10,000. I had three jobs and my wife worked. I would save up for a few months and buy as much film stock as I could then get a few more jobs. It took

me a year to shoot and my lab gave me credit. I just needed \$10,000 to finish the mix and I got that from my family.

The first sequence I shot was the jungle nightmare sequence, that was just me, my brother and two or three other crew people. I'd show that to people and get more crew members and people interested. Nothing was going to stop me. I didn't have to deal with anybody (in



distribution). Since, I've sold a screenplay to Vestron that was a nightmare, I saw the business side of things. They don't care about film, it's just a commodity to them.

RED: How does one maintain control over his work and avoid butchery by the studio or distributor?

NS: Very few major directors have final cut, final approval—Stanley Kubrick, Woody Allen. Very few have complete control, maybe a half dozen. It's a tough situation.

BG: The trick is to make your film as cheaply as possible because the cheaper it is, the less they care about it. The more money they spend, the more control they want over their (to protect their) investment.

NS: Successful is all that counts. You could make the worst film in the

world, but if it's successful, that's all that matters. The business of it keeps a lot of people from making films.

RED: Perl, did you try to get around part of the problem by shooting on video?

PL: We looked at the competition in our class, shot on video, and found most to be very static. There's one called SPINE that is the worst piece of shit I've even seen, the worst fuckin' movie ever. Within one segment of REDNECK ZOMBIES we made more cuts than that entire movie had for 90 minutes. We decided to utilize the video possibilities and have fun—make a party tape.

NS: Suppose one of us makes it big-Hollywood style. Look what's happened to others. Tobe Hooper was saying he wasn't getting his money's worth and came out with THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, apparently his only good film. When they wave dollars in front of your face, you're going to make what they want, not what you want. Of the thousands of directors, there's maybe three who do it exactly the way they want to.

BG: The biggest thing as a director is to keep making films, with every one you'll get better and better. There are always things to do to subvert the script, directorial touches to get across. If you're talking final cut, you're not going to get that, but I think what's more important is to make something that you can at least live with. Even if I was just a gun for hire, I'd find a way to subvert it.

There are no horror movies anymore, they are all horror-comedies.

RED: What kind of filmmaking experience did you have working with Troma?

PL: They were really tough films, it was like boot camp. A lot of times I got complete artistic license from Lloyd (Kaufman) to just let me go with the camera. "Here's a camera and 1000 feet of film, go shoot this sequence." I wouldn't have missed the experience. It gives you a peek at what you're in for; it makes you more ready. A little sparring with the studio, compromises can be made.

BG: A lot of times, they're just testing you to see how far you're willing to fight. As a director, actors will test you too. I remember working with Joe Spinell, he tested me. He was pushing and pulling for power, instructing the crew on shots (MANIAC 2 promo reel). It bothered me. I took as much as I could then said, "Fuck it! Joe, you want to direct the film, you direct it. I'm leaving." From that point on, I knew he'd just been testing me.



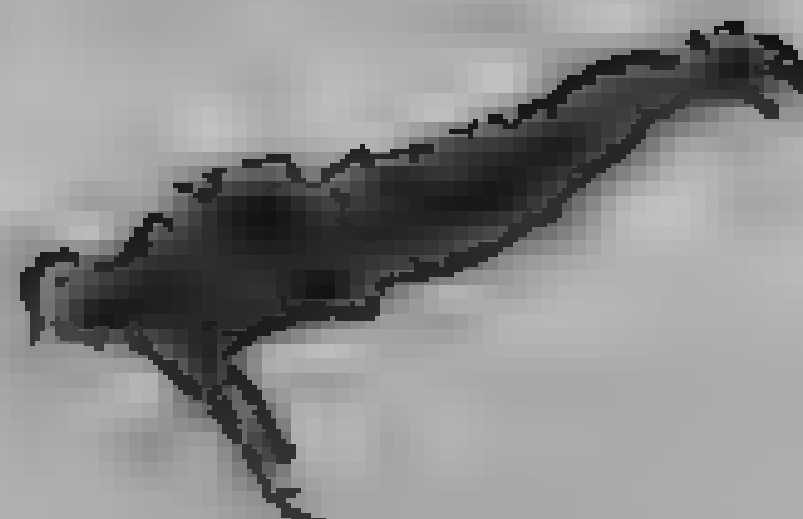
A lot of times with Vestron on SHE'S BACK (DEAD AND MARRIED) they would put up a front to get their point across and we were fighting for our points. You could feel the push and pull and then they'd pull away. You got to let them see you're not going to be walked on. If they know you're a push-over on the set, you'll never direct a picture.

I think that's what it's about being an artist in filmmaking, you can't be inflexible. In COMBAT SHOCK, it was my own money and no one was telling me what to do, but still I had to make compromises every day with actors and the crew. It is a group effort.

NS: Today, it's one lousy film after another, by the same person, too. Endlessly. Here's a perfect example. Andy Milligan's been making films since the early '60's and I've lost count of his films. He's not learned one thing more about filmmaking than his first piece of trash. He remakes already terrible pictures. The worst. Then there's Roberta Findlay who made lots of exploitation pictures with her husband. He got decapitated atop the Pan Am building.

RED: Partial or complete? **TROMA:** NS I think his whole head was off, maybe the lower jaw and three teeth left. They did a film called SLAUGHTER in 1969 or '70. Considered it terrible, just junk, and it was shelved. Then they picked it up and shot a new ending and called it SNUFF. They worked on BLOOD FARMERS, SHRIEK OF THE MUTILATED, and many, many porno films. Here's someone who has been making films for two decades and has not learned one damn thing. Terrible pictures, one after the next. The only person that gets away with that is Herschell Gordon Lewis.

REDNECK ZOMBIES was like a first novel, we just vomited that film out and we were really happy when the chunks fell. The whole thing was FUCH AN LETS Dance.



FROMAS V

He knew they were bad pictures, he didn't hide the fact. He knew how to exploit them. On every conceivable level, you can see that Lewis was one of the worst directors in the history of film. Larry Buchanan's still making bad films-MARS NEEDS WOMEN? Larry Needs Talent!

BG. The business is afraid of people who have "artistic visions."

NS. Look at David Lynch. Who would've thought the director of ERASERHEAD would become a mainstream filmmaker?

BG. They took a chance with DUNE. When you're dealing with an artist, not everything is going to work. I think the key is to work cheaply, don't go for the mega-budget.

NS. One person you'll notice who is obviously truthful and really cares about film is George Romero. He loves his work. He's stayed away from Hollywood.

BG. He's made two of the most haunting films I've ever seen, NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD and DAY OF THE DEAD. DAY OF THE DEAD is one of the scariest, most nightmarish films I've ever seen. It's so different from DAWN, it scared the hell out of me.

NS. NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD broke all the taboos. It showed graphic gore, children eating their parents, cannibalism, corpses coming back to life, dead friends coming back to eat you.

RED. Where's the hope lie for future horror?

NS. The future shows not much light. Sam Raimi, though, is a great director, a great technician.

RED. But don't you think the EVIL DEAD movies are overrated?

NS. They're not overrated and you know why? Today everything is so damn bad that those films look actually good.

BG. I love 'em. They have a vision, a technical and conceptual vision.

NS. Another horrifying trend is this direct-to-video thing, we're being ripped off with films that were never released theatrically. SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE 2—we're getting sequels to films nobody's ever heard about and they are absolutely worthless, terrible. You look at those fabulous boxes, hoping for a thrill, and you get crap. Junk.

RED. There appears to be a real lack of originality in nearly every major studio release these days.

BG. Everything's been done before. It's all in the execution, the approach to an idea.

RED. Did you think about Lynch's ERASERHEAD mutant baby when you did COMBAT SHOCK?

BGS. I knew exactly what I was doing from Day One. I was never going to have a baby, I was going to have a sound effect off camera. Ralph Cordero

BUDDY GIOVINAZZO



asked me about the baby and I said, "You won't see it. I'm just going to use a sound effect." He said, "No, fuck that. Let me build you a puppet baby." So, I gave him like \$60 and he built this baby. Looking back, what ruined the film for all the mainstream critics was that baby. The baby blew it out of the water for them. It was too surreal, it was a comic book, it was bullshit. But we're dealing with a warped perspective here which I find really attractive in all my work.

RED Pen, is TOXIC AVENGER 2 going to deliver the groceries?

PL With TOXIC 2, we had an incredible crew working and it's going to definitely be a different look than the first film. A lot of people are going to be surprised.

RED Do you feel your original "artistic vision" has been compromised by studio distribution interference?

BG You talk about artistic, but I tell you the truth. I doubt if there's any filmmaker that is thinking about art while on the set. Art is the last possible thing you'd be thinking. You're thinking about covering your material, getting it shot as closely as possible to what you envision in your head and moving on to the next set up. I wasn't thinking "art" for one second on my film.

RED In the future, do you feel you could be satisfied just writing for the movies, instead of taking on the whole production distribution deal?

BG I don't think I'll be writing screenplays at 50 to release any "artistic feelings." Writing screenplays is probably the most "unartistic" thing you could ever do. Anybody can change it along the way. When I want to get something out of my system - to get my rocks off - I write prose. In some ways, writing prose is more fulfilling (than film) because you can do it immediately. Writing screenplays is very unrewarding, but they do help you hedge your bet for directing. If you sell a couple of screenplays, you can almost guarantee directing your third or fourth screenplay. That's the route I'm going. I have a few screenplays under option with Tyein films, Tim Knead is slated to direct several and I'm slated to direct one of them. It's tough writing a screenplay and then watching everybody else change it, you have to bite the bullet.

RED What are you up to Nathan?

NS I've just finished something called VIRMILLION EYES that's the last Super 8 thing I'll be doing. The next film will be in 16mm and I've got a few full-length scripts that I've been laboring on all in the genre. It's easy to write a FRIDAY THE 13TH, you don't need a screenwriter. The "thinking horror pictures" are what I want to do.

RED REDNECK ZOMBIES is in the can. You've just finished working on TROMA'S WAR and TOXIC AVENGER 2. What's next for you, Pen?

PL I have two things on the burner right now. The first is called SCRAPS, an "action horror picture" an American version of the Mexican Santo movies. It's about a man who's been obsessed with hunting monsters. He's murdered and reassembled into this massive killer, murderous wrestler

who goes after these monsters. The other is HELLSTONE which is really serious, an EXORCIST type film. It doesn't pull any punches.

RED Don't you have a film coming out soon, Buddy?

BG In October SHE'S BACK (ULAD AND MARRIED) comes out. It's my screenplay, directed by Tim Knead. I'm really happy with the job Tim did. It's a black comedy. Carrie Fisher is the wife and Robert Joy is the husband. She's killed by a street gang on the first day they move into their new home and he's the Danny Kaye/Walter Matthau winpy type. She comes back to nag him about roaming the streets, looking for the gang.

I have RADAR WAVES, an act in script, optioned to Tyein and I'm shopping JONATHAN OF THE NIGHT.

I'm also shopping around a film I can do in the meantime for under \$500,000. It's sick, not as black or downbeat as COMBAT SHOCK, but it's got a lot of the same surrealistic sickness.

NS If I ever got a big multi-million dollar budget, I would definitely do a Giant Monster In A City Picture. I would spend \$50 million on a picture about a giant monster in a city. The American Godzilla.

"You guys haven't lived until you've seen THE SHIT EATER."

BG No minatures, either.

RED You guys have any hints on Carnage for the Connoisseur?

NS I've got something to recommend. I just remembered ANGUISH. That movie's like a bad fever dream, it's completely insane, a refreshing change.

BG How about CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST? You keep talking about it. I should see it.

RED It's a film that forces you to take a stand about several pressing issues in our beloved genre.

NS I didn't like MAKE THEM DIE SLOWLY or DOOMED TO DIE Sick.

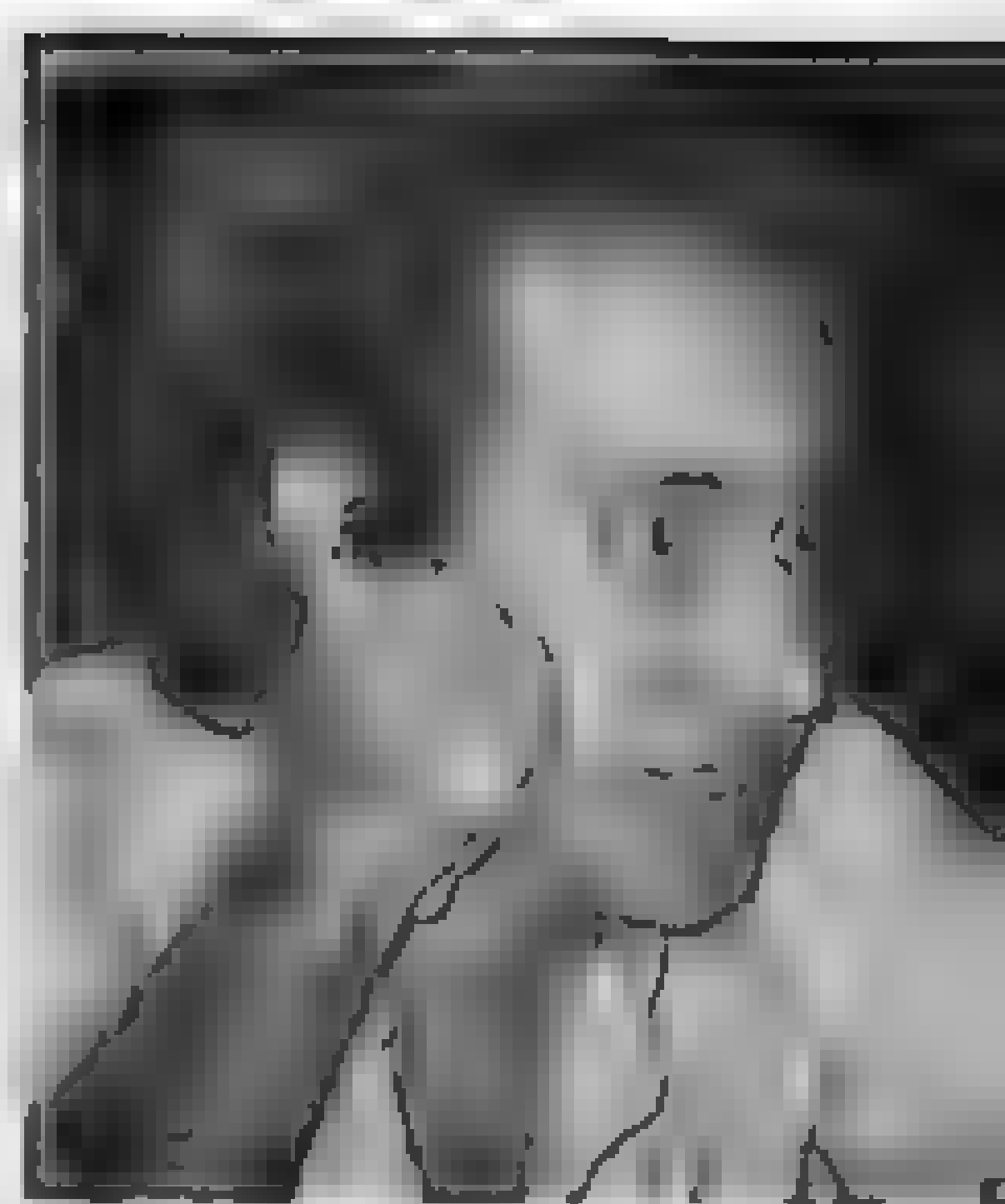
BG You should see this, how about SHOCKING ASIA?

RED The one with the segment on the sex change operation?

BG I couldn't walk for a week.

NS I don't know if it's in the genre, but I'd say MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE (followed by a long dissertation on the parallels between KILLER SHREWS and NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD).

Some people like just too many. For instance on your "Buried Treasures" (DEEP RED, Issue 5) I think you left too many in there. Like CHILDREN



SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS should've been silenced. It was boring.

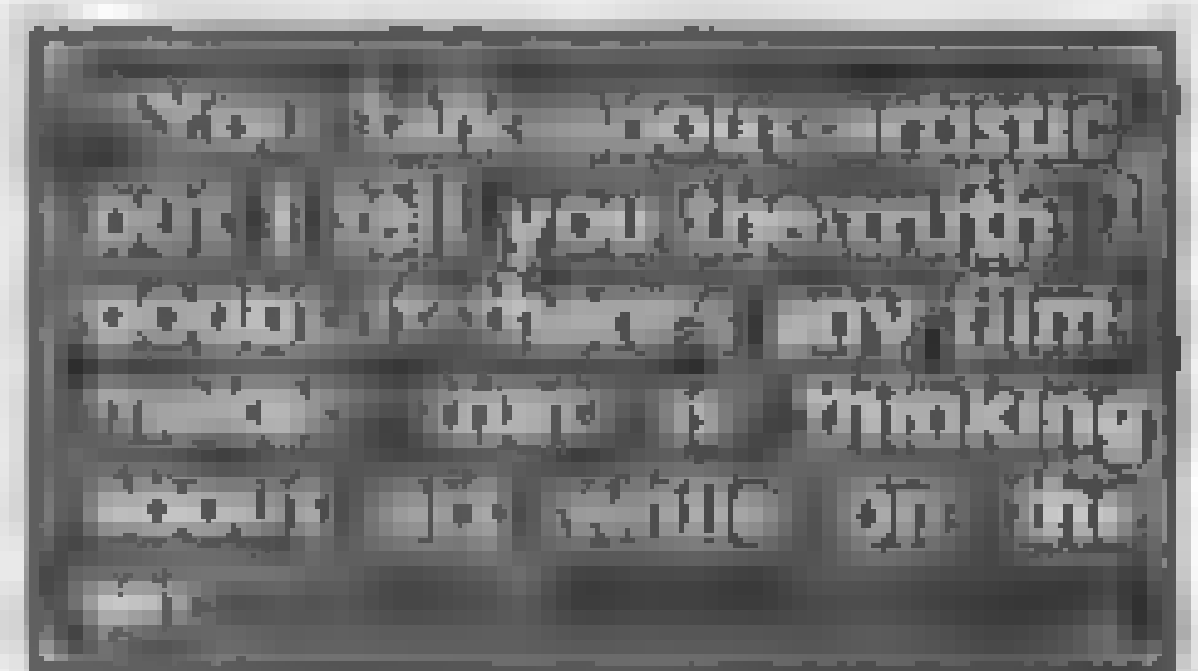
BG I loved that film.

I say "Yes" to CARNIVAL OF SOULS, one of the scariest films I've ever seen. I still have nightmares.

NS The uncut FLESH EATERS is another favorite.

PL My favorites would be films like THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE, THE GREEN SLIME. A documentary that I thought was scary is ATOMIC CAFE.

It's hard to scare people these days. During the '50's, you had your giant monster movies which are offshoots of all the nuclear bullshit that goes on. Even TOXIC AVENGER has the "nuclear" feel to it. I think now the horror has got to go inside, to the mind.



REDNECK ZOMBIES was like a first novel; we just vomited that film out and we were really happy where the chunks fell. The whole thing was "Fuck Art, Let's Dance."

NS Excuse the title, but about the FIG FUCKING MOVIE?

BG I own the FIG FUCKING MOVIE. It was given to me as a gift. O-o-o-h-h. It isn't a feature film. A friend of mine owns a movie called THE SHIT EATER which needs no explanation. One of the most bizarre disgusting things. It's what it says. It's this guy eating shit out of two chicks. Really, no cuss.

RED: No prosthetic asses here?
EG: No. No. No. Real stuff. Hot dog, kielbasa stuff. You guys haven't lived until you've seen **THE SHIT EATER**. Now, a year later, my best buddy gives me the **PIG FUCKING MOVIE**. It's gotta be Swedish or Danish with farmhouses across a beautiful countryside and this retarded, 65-year-old cross-eyed guy comes riding up on an old-fashioned bicycle. He parks it and goes inside the barn and there's this gigantic, fat pig. So, he starts eating out the pig. Unbelievable. He starts fucking this pig. Now the pig doesn't want to be fucked so the pig's running around the stable with the guy holding its tail. (Other unspeakable barnyard sex hi-jinks follow. You don't want to know the rest, believe me. ed.)

NS: That's sickening, that's too much. That's a little too outrageous.

RED: How about **AUTOPSY** by the same guy?

NS: It's actually good, believe it or not. They do show a real autopsy though it's a story, it's a movie. It's comical in a way; it gets philosophical, then ridiculous, then gets philosophical, intelligent, then ridiculous. It's about 90 minutes. Not exploitation, the guy knew what he was doing. You gotta see **I HATE YOUR GUTS**. Rick Sullivan is right when he says, "It's a racist version of **LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT**." You will be screaming...this is beyond and beyond. Unbelievable. I don't know how it got made, it's so racist. Every insult in human history.

Just unbelievable. You've gotta see it.

DEEP RED

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You'll Be Screaming Too!!

The Guthrie Theater

FRANKENSTEIN PLAYING WITH FIRE

THEATRE REVIEW BY: KRIS GILPIN



The Guthrie Theatre of Minneapolis, Minnesota, brought their road show of **FRANKENSTEIN, PLAYING WITH FIRE** to the James Doolittle Theatre (near Hollywood and Vine in L.A.) from May 3rd to the 15th, 1988. I knew that any "reworking" of the classic morality tale by Mary Shelley performed on stage was something I had to check out, I was very happy I caught the last Sunday matinee of their Los Angeles tour.

Written for this production by a woman, Barbara Field, and directed by Michael Maggio (who stepped on stage to announce a substitution for Adam, the younger Creature played that day by Morgan Duncan, and to tell us this would be the 106th performance of the Guthrie's **FRANKENSTEIN** they had performed), the lights came up to reveal a hunched-over figure sitting on the floor, stage right. The man was middle-aged, with long hair and beard (upon which was "ice"), and wisps of dry ice/smoke seeped up through the stage floor around him. The setting was the North Pole and the man was freezing, with gangrene crawling up his legs.

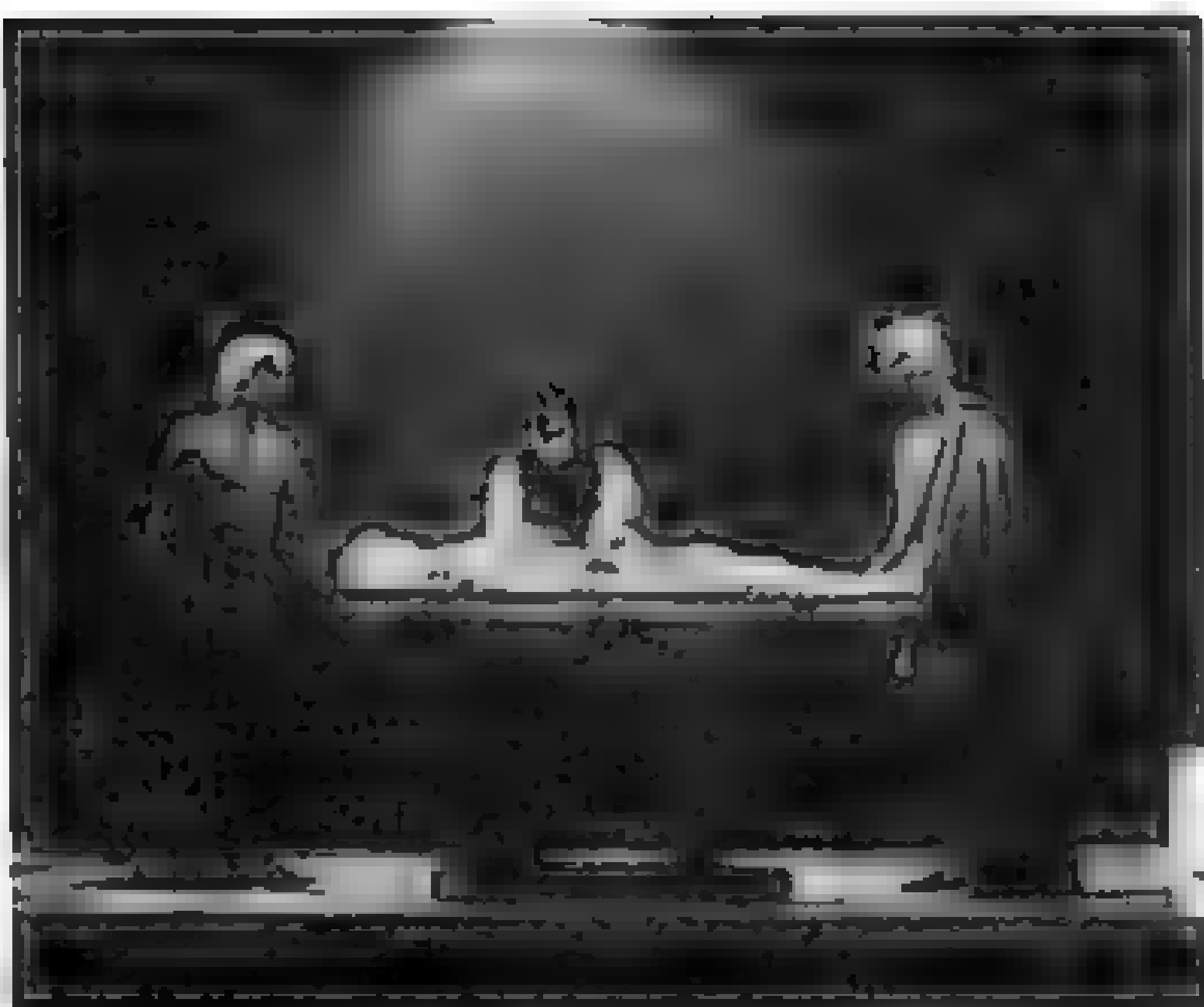
On the opposite side of the stage stood a thin man in green body makeup (showing "muscles" and "veins"), wearing a wiry, white fright wig. Also on either side on the stage floor was a small metal and glass bench, on which the actors would lean and sit. The freezing man held a gun on the other one. After about seven minutes of dialogue, we realize that this is an older Victor Frankenstein, who, finally tracking him down after all those years, has come to kill his creation, now living at the North Pole.

The play is very literate, evoking, for the most part, the literal style and feel of the dialogue from the 19th century novel, the acting is properly directed melodramatically (restrained, though, without going overboard). There is also a touch of humor now and then (Frankenstein: "Why do you want to destroy me?" Creature: "Because I'm hideous. Why do you want to destroy me?" Frankenstein: "Because you hate me!")

As they speak, they remember the past. Flashbacks are shown as the lights at the front of stage are dimmed and back lights are brought up, revealing a raised platform on stage upon which the flashbacks are acted out by younger actors playing the younger Doctor and his creation (as the first two actors sit at the front of the stage floor in the darkness). We see a young Victor (which the junior Frankenstein is referred to as) in love with his lovely cousin, Elizabeth (Curzon Dobell and Olivia Birkeland, respectively). The first of the two acts ends with a simple but effective Birth of the Creature scene, as a table rises from the raised platform, upon which Adam (the younger Creature) stands and screams.

The elder Doctor and Creature speak of life and death, as the creation demands of his "Master" to tell him, "Why was I born?" Peter Syvertsen, as the older Creature, brought a good sense of sarcasm to lines like, "Paris is a freak show, a carnival of horrors. No one even noticed me!"

In our final flashback scene Adam pleads with Victor to make him a mate, he does, as the table rises again, only to express his anxiety over his original experiment. Victor stabs Adam's budding



bride and yanks out a long rubber string of guts from the dummy's torso. Adam cries, of course, and soon afterwards kills Elizabeth, sending the young Frankenstein on his long search for revenge (leading up to the first scene of the play). Reaching a spiritual bond after all their talking, the present-time Creature asks the freezing Frankenstein to shoot him, but the gangrene kills the Doctor before he can. A thoroughly depressed Creature huddles over Frankenstein's body crying, "Master" as the lights fade to black.

This was an intriguing approach to a stage telling of this classic story. The one bad point of **FRANKENSTEIN, PLAYING WITH FIRE** is that there is far too much dialogue and not enough action. But, even though a play can at times feel "boring," it is always fascinating to watch. The acting by all was excellent and the retelling and staging was diverting enough to make the show entertaining and of interest. (Despite the fact it was \$25 a head but only because it was in the Doolittle Theatre, though.) Perhaps it will find its way to your city soon.

Director	Michael Maggio
Set Designer	John Arnone
Costume Designer	Jack Edwards
Lighting Designer	Marcus Dillard
Sound Designer	John Calder
Dramaturg	Michael Lupu
Stage Manager	Russell Johnson
Assistant	Peter S. Del Vecchio
Casting Director	Jason LaPadura
Casting Consultants	Doug Finlayson
	Dennis McCullough

Chas. Balun NINTH & HELL STREET

From the forthcoming novel to be published by FantaCo Enterprises, Inc

CHAPTER 2

For Buddy G. Dominus robascum

Easter Sunday - 4:03 a.m.

The rectory doorbell at St Sebastian's Church was buzzing madly. Father O'Connor, the senior parish priest, stirred immediately. He was a light sleeper, able to subsist on only three or four hours a night and before he could even begin hussing a quiet curse, he was up and gathering his robe about him for the inevitable confrontation.

Must be trouble. Had to be. All things righteous and holy never required the services of a priest this damn early. He knew that. This caller could only be some poor, pitiable wretch desperately seeking peace, simple solace at any price.

In his haste O'Connor forgot his slippers and the creaky, cold hardwood floor rewarded him with a mild case of frostbite by the time he had reached the door and punched the "transmit" button on the intercom.

"What is it?" he spoke into the box. "This is Father O'Connor and it's it's..." Glancing down at his wrist and seeing only freckled skin, he stammered, "It's a little early, wouldn't you say? Can this wait?"

O'Connor released the button on the box and without pause an even-toned, slightly husky voice replied "Father, I need you to hear my confession. Right now."

Replying in his best, most benevolent and soothing pastor's voice, O'Connor said evenly, "I understand, my son, but can't you come back in a few hours for our Easter Sunrise service? We'll be hearing confessions before mass."

He didn't need the intercom to hear the frenzied shriek that broke into his feeble plea for good manners. "Father! Look outside!"

O'Connor moved to his left a few steps and slightly parted the aging, faded and truly ugly green curtains that hung on either side of the door and peered out into the dark. He'd forgotten the porch light and when he'd found the switch and flipped it, he wasn't prepared for the sight that greeted him in the pre-dawn hours. Standing perhaps eighteen inches away from the window was a man clutching a black, beaded rosary in one fist and a high caliber, long barreled handgun in the other, pressed into his eye socket with the hammer cocked.

The man was shaking slightly, probably due to the early morning chill, as his otherwise composed demeanor and steady gaze betrayed the fact that he looked positively insane standing out there like that.

"Come, Father. I must get inside the church. I need your Easter blessing and Holy Communion."

All of the previously viable options O'Connor had considered suddenly evaporated, leaving only the obvious—he must accept the madman's terms. A priest cannot simply stand there and witness a man about to blow himself to hell for all eternity for the heinous act of self-termination and do nothing. O'Connor knew he couldn't remain unmobilized with fear and cowardice. It was time to ply the trade high time. Be understanding, impartial and, most of all, merciful. Time to be the healer.

Besides, O'Connor mused, cleaning this guy's brains off of the porch was absolutely no way to begin a High Holy Day. Normally, he would've chuckled to himself, as O'Connor often displayed a bit of macabre wit, but no time for that now.

The priest unlocked the deadbolt, removed the security chain and quickly stepped out into the frosty air. Time to play the professional shepherd to this poor, pathetic, bleating lamb on his doorstep.

O'Connor ignored the cold bite of the concrete on his bare feet and, as a slight morning breeze ruffled his thinning hair, he prepared to do business with the devil. In his most studied, most convincing of friars' voice he said gently but firmly, "Alright now, son, what is it that you really want?"

O'Connor could sense immediately that this man was definitely not insane. He knew exactly what he was doing. His piercing, cold grey eyes held secrets that the priest did not want revealed, now or ever. O'Connor could feel a malevolent and powerful force emanating from this man and realized that argument, logic, platitudes and a fervent Christian faith were of no use to him now. So he began to trust an even baser instinct he knew he could always count on—his will to survive. Yes, to see the Easter sunrise just one more time. O'Connor held that thought and let everything else just fall away. Survival became his religion.

He stepped off of the porch with the man and told him they could enter at the rear of the church through a door that was rarely, if ever, locked. After all, this was a fairly exclusive kind of neighborhood, one in which street crime, theft, assaults, even drugs were practically non-existent. Good breeding and education, yes, maybe that and the highest per capita income in the county were, no doubt, contributing factors to this rather squeaky clean kind of parish.

O'Connor liked this place. A lot. He had found he could just as easily minister to the healthy and wealthy as to the grubby and downtrodden layabouts who were always wailing and beseeching their God in some cacophonous foreign tongue, unable to ever see that God really helps those who help themselves.

Jack O'Connor and the man slowly approached the rear of the church and turned the corner. Unaware, they entered the priest's dressing area and O'Connor flipped a bank of switches that illuminated the room, the hallway, as well as the altar itself. He also noticed for the very first time that the man was carrying a small bag with him, a nylon satchel, carrying all type of things that he'd never seen before on the parish. Must've stolen it somewhere in the hood. O'Connor couldn't help but think that there must indeed be a method to this man's madness. He let out a sigh. This intruder was manipulating him, and O'Connor felt his own faith and courage slowly draining away. The crackle had played a role of that. The priest was alive to carry the message further because he feared what he might find.

O'Connor walked ahead. He knew the gun was trained on him, he thought he could feel its barrel bore into his back, though he knew the intruder was a good ten strides behind him. Funny how the man so lost interest in taking his own life once the priest had merged into the scenery. The sound of a just a gun. The man had no intention of terminating himself, he surely knew how a priest would respond to the situation he had provided it worked. Everything was working now. Perfectly. Too damn easy even.

Now that they were nearly upon the altar, the man began issuing a series of orders. He must definitely had a plan and O'Connor felt the fear.

The lush green carpet soaked the priest's feet, unaccustomed as he was to walking barefoot upon the sacred ground as he knelt, prostrated and crossed himself in front of the tabernacle.

"Now, Father," the intruder ordered, "I want you to crawl up to the altar and kneel down. Don't look back at me. Pray as if your life depends on it."

O'Connor didn't see the sound of that. The man's confidence was growing by the minute. For the first time, the priest felt really afraid. He looked up to see his Jesus hanging on the cross and remembered his promise was near the end when he cried to his Father, "Why has this forsaken me?" Although O'Connor was now deep within God's house, it appeared as though no one was home.

The priest slowly and deliberately approached the tabernacle and knelt before it. He crossed himself again, he really meant it this time.

The man was suddenly behind him now, dropping his bag and quickly unzipping it. He removed objects and placed them on the altar, out of sight of

the priest's narrowed eyes. The objects made a rattling metallic sound as they were dropped together, and O'Connor found himself deeply lost in his study of flesh hastily smoothed Act of Contrition.

"Father, keep your head bowed. Don't look at me. Look at the floor. I'll blow your face off if I see your eyes open."

Then, calmly without emotion with out concern, the man commanded, "Give me your right hand, Father." The priest obeyed. The man laid the hand palm down on the altar and grabbed one of the metal objects, positioning it upright on the back of the priest's hand.

O'Connor felt something cool, hard and pointed come into contact with his flesh. Not really sharp, but unyielding. In an instant, the hammer reigned down and drove the search spike through the priest's hand and deeply into the hard oak beneath it.

O'Connor crumpled, but not before the man had a firm grasp on his left arm. He tried to resist, attempted to stand, but he was dizzy from pain. He tried to wrest his left arm from the vise-like grip, but he could feel the struggle was futile. This ordinary looking man possessed inhuman strength. The priest screamed and the sudden outburst was met with a ferocious blow across his mouth as the hammer crashed against his teeth and shattered his face.

The priest choked on his splintered teeth and the blood that was rapidly filling his throat. Through tearstained eyes, he glanced up, only to witness the hammer once again rushing downward, connecting with yet another spine driven into the back of his left hand and into the hardwood. He spread up both arms and met at his chest, burying its white hot intensity deep within his breast. He cried out through great gusts of blood and shattered teeth, shuddering and wracked with incredible pain. He felt a sudden warmth and wetness between his legs as a small yellow pool slowly spread beneath him.

His choking, painful sobs were met with derisive laughter. Unmistakable things swam before his eyes as the priest pained, strangled for consciousness. O'Connor looked up one last time. The man was not there, but Jesus was, beckoning him homeward. He thought he felt a slight pinprick at the base of skull at the place where that little indented trench ran between the neck muscles. It felt cool, pointed, precise. The man was behind him now when, suddenly, O'Connor's universe exploded in a hail of bone fragments, broken teeth and frothy blood. A third spike emerged

from his mouth, forcibly shattering his jaw as he raised up instinctively from the terrible blow to the back of his head.

The priest may or may not have heard a click from the revolver as the man placed the barrel in the priest's ear, but he was sure he heard a typhoon like wind rush through his head and explode out the other side, blowing him right into the arms of his Divine Savior.

Quickly now, the gunman circled around again and found the thickest pool of freshly erupted blood and dipped his hand into it. He brought the hot, slightly salty clump up to his lips. The words came easily enough, he'd been an altar boy, after all, and Catholics don't ever forget that stuff. "Take this and drink. This is my blood, the blood of the eternal covenant, shed for you and the forgiveness of sin."

He redipped his hand into the ever widening pool formed by the great gouts of blood pouring forth from the priest's head and winnowed a short, cryptic message on the redspeckled cloth that draped the altar. He stepped back and felt wonderfully free and unfettered. The earth could no longer hold him. His body burned and crackled with a new, inner valuing force. His mind lit up with a million fantastic images and his nerve endings sparked with divine fire. His body glowed, the white pulverized flames enveloped him, their cosmic brilliance reflected back at him from the highly polished, golden dome of the tabernacle. His body was nothing now but a shimmering column of pure white light, an eternal fire burning away the remnants of earthly bondage. He left his physical prison behind, on the altar, with the sacrifice.

The corporeal body, now just a vacated shell, crumbled upon the altar. The shape then became something else altogether. A massive, pulsing river of pink and white and red cascaded down the carpeted steps as the writhing horde of maggots established their claim upon the holy ground.

The intruder had left behind his bag, tools, a dead priest, the transformed remnants of his earthly body and an Easter message for all the faithful. "He is Risen."

The novel, NINTH & HELL STREET, will be published by FantaCo Enterprises, Inc., 21 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12210, in the Spring of 1989 (\$4.95 + \$2.00 shipping).



BISSETTE Draws The Line

BY CHAS. BALUN

Oh, excuse me, but when publisher Tom Skolan mentioned to me a year or so ago that a horror connoisseur by the name of Stephen Bissette would like to meet me and perhaps contribute to our fledgling magazine, I replied with a rather noncommittal, "Oh, sure. Okay. Shit, howdy!" I didn't know Steve Bissette was a COMICS LEGEND! Revered by many and acclaimed by some as "comics' next superstar" and the "best horror illustrator of the decade," this dude, Bissette, came armed with a heavy arsenal of credentials. And, pity poor me not knowing jack shit about it either. So kick me I immediately established an attitude I always do when someone's work makes me feel as though I'd never progressed past Freehand Drawing 101A. Bissette has a fine, fine hand. Consider his work as Bernd Wrightson's successor in the popular Swamp Thing comic books, his contributions to House of Mystery,



Besides his obvious graphic abilities, Bassette also has seen more fucking weird genre movies than anybody knows. Clive Barker personally and is single-handedly responsible for turning your ears into CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST, Badly Grownazzos' great AMERICAN NIGHTMARS (aka COMBAT SHOCK) and a bunch of perverse, ultra-violent, quasi-pornographic Japanese animated features that are unlike anything you've ever experienced. Gotta like this guy, Cassy? Fuck the ego thing, Charlie.

Okay, that's sufficient enough back-ground. Pull up a chair, relax, and enjoy a visit with an extremely talented guy who "takes our talk" and lets us explain why he sits up late at night watching stuff like MEAT, GORE! BODY SNATCHER FROM HILL, SALO 120 DAYS OF SODOM or THE ROBOT VS THE AZTEC MUMMY.

SB With fine art, I can nail it down to a few people. When I was a kid, the biggest impression made on me by artwork was Hieronymus Bosch's "The Garden of Earthly Delights," with its hallucinogenic visions of demons, hell and eternal torment. I was raised Catholic, that's why Bosch made such an impression on me as a kid. It seemed to fit in with the Catholic dogmas being poured into our heads. I started to become a lapsed Catholic when I started to dip out

Anyway, back to fine art. Charles R. Knight, the painter of the turn of the century who did marvelous reconstructions of dinosaurs. Exquisite work. The dinosaur paintings we all have seen since we were kids have been a major, major influence on me.

Zdenek Burian, a Czechoslovakian painter, who made it his life's work to paint an exact rendition of life on the planet. He was a brilliant, brilliant artist.

In the way of comic book artists - Basil Wolverton. I don't know of any comic artists that were brain damaged by Wolverton. One of a kind, a total original.

Joe ("Tarzan") Kubert is the better artist and he was probably the biggest personal influence on me. I was able to apprentice under the man for a couple of years, that was incredible.

Jack Kirby, of course. He did a monster story called "Fing Fang Foom." I remember when I was four years old just staring at this huge Chinese dragon, I couldn't believe how big he looked.



Also, a lot of how I learned to draw people and creatures and depict movement on the page was by studying Ray Harryhausen's work. I have to cite that as a major artistic influence on my work. I really learned a lot about movement from the way he animated the Ymir in 20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH. In high school, I had an 8mm projector and I would study his films frame by frame and sketch while I watched.

Also, a lot of Mario Bavi's films spill over into my work--the way I draw faces or how I try to use atmospheric lighting. Watching stuff like **BLACK SUNDAY** and **BLOOD AND BLACK LACE**.





THAT'S BLOOD
YOU'RE TASTING
IN YOUR
MOUTH

DON'T TRY
IT ISN'T YOURS.

IT'S OURS.

UNPLEASANT,
I KNOW, BUT I
WON'T WORRY, THOUGH

THE TASTE WILL BE
GONE AS SOON AS YOUR
MOUTH DRIES OUT

AFTER ALL,
THEY ARE
SUPER-
ABSORBENT

AND YOU
SHANT GET
THEM OUT OF
YOUR MOUTH

IT WILL BE
MUCH QUICKER
FOR YOU THAN
IT WAS FOR
A ONE OF US

YOU'LL CHOKE
ON YOUR OWN
VOMIT.

YOU'LL
SUFFOCATE.

OR THE
SHOCK

OR
ELSE YOU
COULD
SIMPLY

... SWALLOW...

ERIC BRISTOW

RED: What projects are you now currently working on?

SB: I've got lots of irons in the fire. I'm holding in my hands a hard bound copy of *Tahoe*, my first project as an editor/publisher. I collected it with John Totterman and co-published it with my wife Nancy. This is gonna be the first of many, it's a quarterly anthology. I'm really pleased with it, it's my Number 1 baby.

I'm also writing and drawing a four issue book called *Common Monsters* working with my good buddy, Peter Lord. That's just a lark we're having fun with no human beings, just wants-wail demons and monsters. It's completely satisfying to the little kid in me. We have no literary pretensions or artsy fartsy visions, we're just getting our rocks off.

RED: How did Clive Barker get involved with *Tahoe*?

SB: I met Clive back in 1985 when John Totterman and I went to England for a big convention. We'd fallen in love with the *Books of Blood*, this was still before Clive had *Ti*, so much of a following doing his thing. We really hit it off and then agreed to meet again when Clive came out to New York. When he did we approached him and asked if he'd be interested in doing some thing for *Tahoe*. He said "Can I write and draw it?" That was his original intention, but then everything sky rocketed for him after that. He got involved in film and he respectfully bowed out from doing the story. He still wanted to help us out somehow and we came back with the idea for him to do the introduction and do an original piece of art for the back. Clive came through in spades. We've got the introduction and three pieces of original art from Clive. He's also been helping us out a lot behind the scenes. At a lot of book signings, Clive would really take up *Tahoe*, he's really been in there for us. Tim Topping has interested in doing a cover for us in the future.

In the meantime, I've gotten myself involved with adapting Clive's "Rawhead Rex" from the short story in the *Books of Blood*. I'll be doing it with a certain amount of participation from Clive at the beginning. He's very gung ho about the project.

I loved all the stuff in those *Books of Blood*, but the only story I want to draw and that I'm driven to draw is "Rawhead Rex". I love monster stories, as you know, and I think that's the best monster story that's been written in our generation. He's unfinching when it comes to putting down on paper just what's in his imagination. I know Clive just hates the movie and that he was eager to see me participate. That's going to be my pet project next year.

Over this winter I'll be working on the adaptation of the story and that. I'll be spending a few months designing the creature. That's the point I hope Clive will show me his drawings and his sketchbook.

RED: What does writing give you that drawing does not? And conversely, what does art give you that writing does not?

"I started to become a lapsed Catholic when I started to clip out the Forbidden Film List from The Catholic Tribune and check off the films I had seen."

SB In writing and I'm worried about is the story. I'm very inhibited when I'm just writing. If I'm writing something I have to draw, I won't write it something I don't want to draw. Sometimes, those aren't the best decisions to be made story-wise—a sort of laziness quotient. But when I'm writing a script, I will follow whatever direction the story takes me without worrying about the end result.

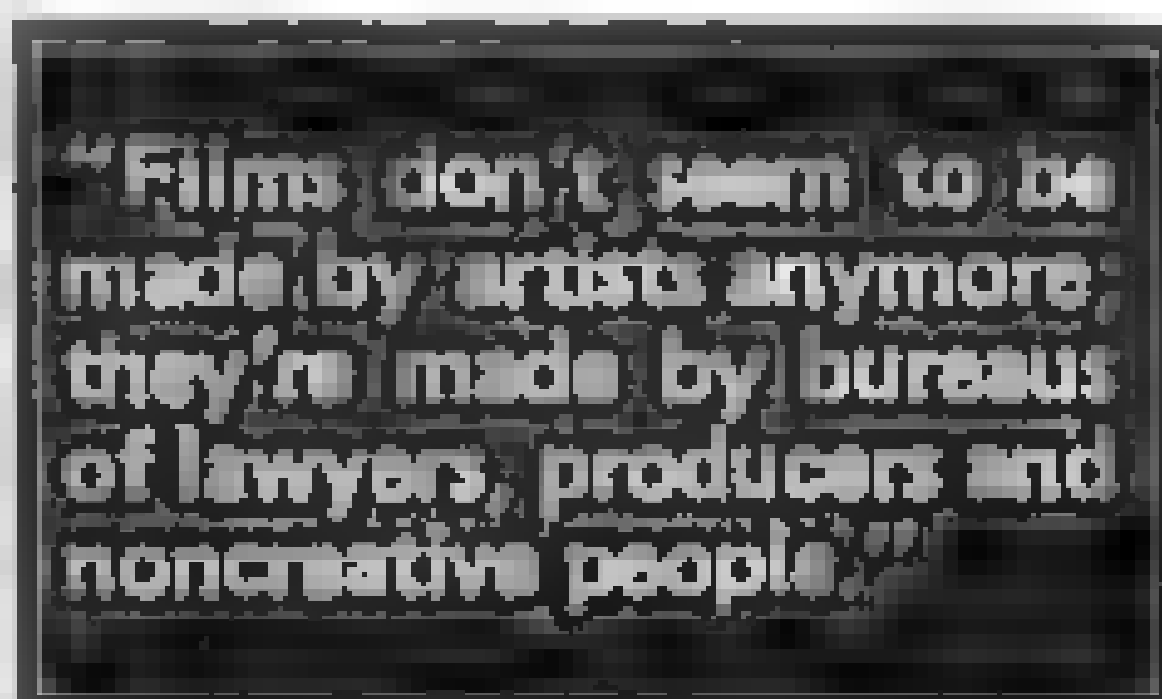
In terms of writing for *DEEP RED*, I find it really satisfying to put down on paper all these thoughts and impressions and insights that I don't read about elsewhere. (Right fuckin' on! ed.)

With art, it's really visceral. Writing becomes this structured, mannered process. Drawing can be so visceral and a really physical exercise that becomes a lot of fun. I am finding now, though, that both writing and drawing my own material is probably the best of all worlds. That's the ultimate high. Drawing is the second best and writing is fun, too, but it's a much more disciplined process.

RED What's wrong with the recent outpouring of horror product? What is missing and where have all the scares gone?

SB Well, there's three things missing! Here we go. I'm sick of the fucking MPAA. I find their judgment incredibly offensive, demeaning. It has castrated freedom in the cinema. It is not a free art form. They maintain they are not censors, but damnit, the fact that a

director like Clive Barker has to sign a contract guaranteeing he'll deliver an "R" rated film and play footsie with the MPAA means they're censors. They are the ones who are enforcing commercial censorship these days. Two of the films I'm looking forward to seeing are *HELLBOUND* and Argento's *OPERA*. Even when they're out on tape they are castrated. For a time, there, it looked like the videocassette market would be a freer outlet and that's no longer the case.



There's this horror boom going on with new monster magazines hitting the stands, but, still, there's this commercial squeeze happening. The folks at New Line have commercialized and made this rip here out of this sadistic child killer. You know, it's fucked up, Chas. Robert Shaye is the man responsible for the commercialization of Freddy. All he's doing is neutering the character. I'm tired of it now and how long until the masses are tired of it? I've seen two episodes of "Freddy's Nightmares," but they're awful. They're not consistent with the concept of Freddy; they're badly done. It's a sorry state of affairs.

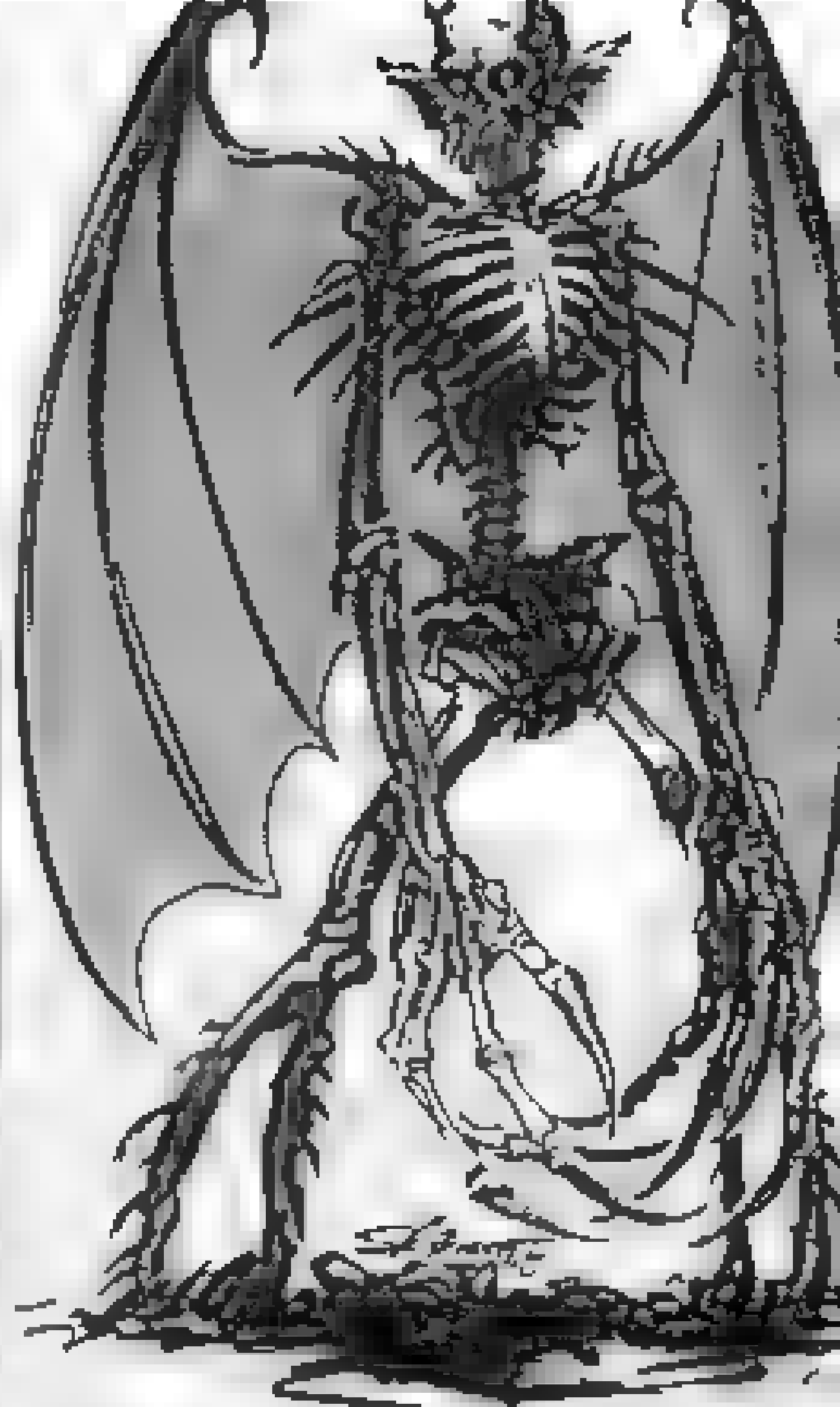
This "horror boom" is being killed with the substandard material that's being poured out there. The masses are being fed this toothless, pre-digested crap and they're just going to get bored with it. What's coming out now is shit and we are going to be right back in the gutter in another five years. The people with substance out there—the George Romeros, David Cronenbergs, Clive Barkers, all have to play ball with the MPAA. I wonder how much of what they're doing will ever get a chance to be seen.

RED What scares you?

SB George Bush scares me. Even scarier than George is his Vice President.

You know, I'm really afraid of death by fire. I don't remember if it's a relative who told me about watching a house burn down, but something from my childhood made quite an impression on me about how awful it would be to die in a fire.

And, I fear for my kids. I fear for the world they're growing up in. The oceans are dying, the planet's being poisoned. What kind of legacy are we



handing down to our children? That scares me.

And, I hope my pecker doesn't fall off. That's the other thing.

RED Do you have a "dream project"?

SB It's a story I've had in my head for about four years and it dates back even further. I have a dream project called "The Big D." The title comes from a Captain Beefheart song. It's a mystery horror science fiction story about time travel, dinosaurs and humanoid.

RED Would you like to become involved with the filmmaking process or is writing and drawing enough?

SB My first love was film. I used to make a lot of 8mm abstract films, horror films. But what steered me into comics instead of making films was the suicide of a friend who'd been studying film. I vicariously lived out my desire to do film through him and when he killed himself it kind of woke me up. Comics were more accessible. All I need to tell a story is to have the story in my head and a piece of paper and a pencil and I can tell you a story with as much emotional impact as many films.

I'm sort of afraid of the filmmaking process. It seems now to be a very prolonged, frustrating process. Films don't seem to be made by artists anymore, they're made by bureaus of lawyers, producers and noncreative people.



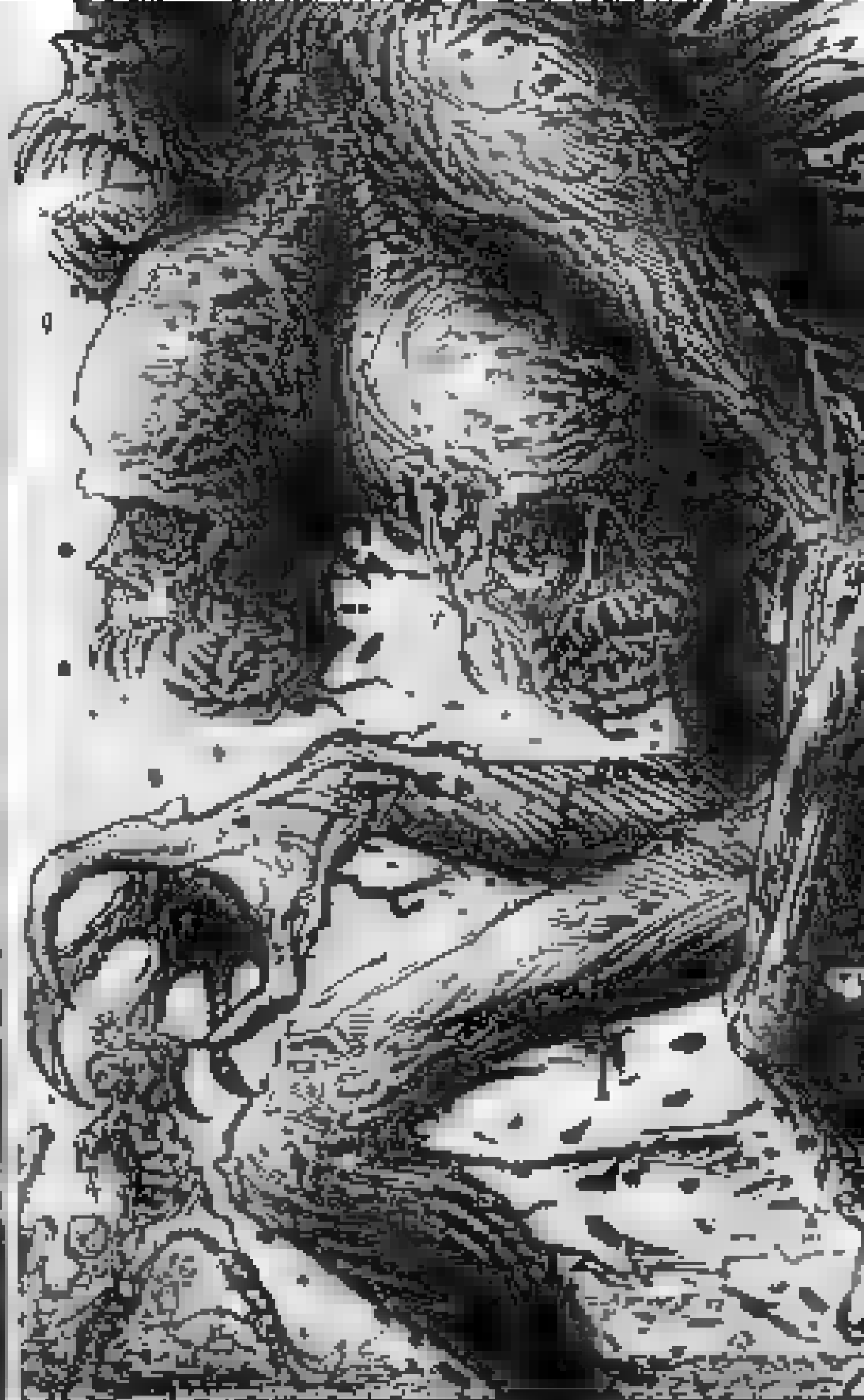
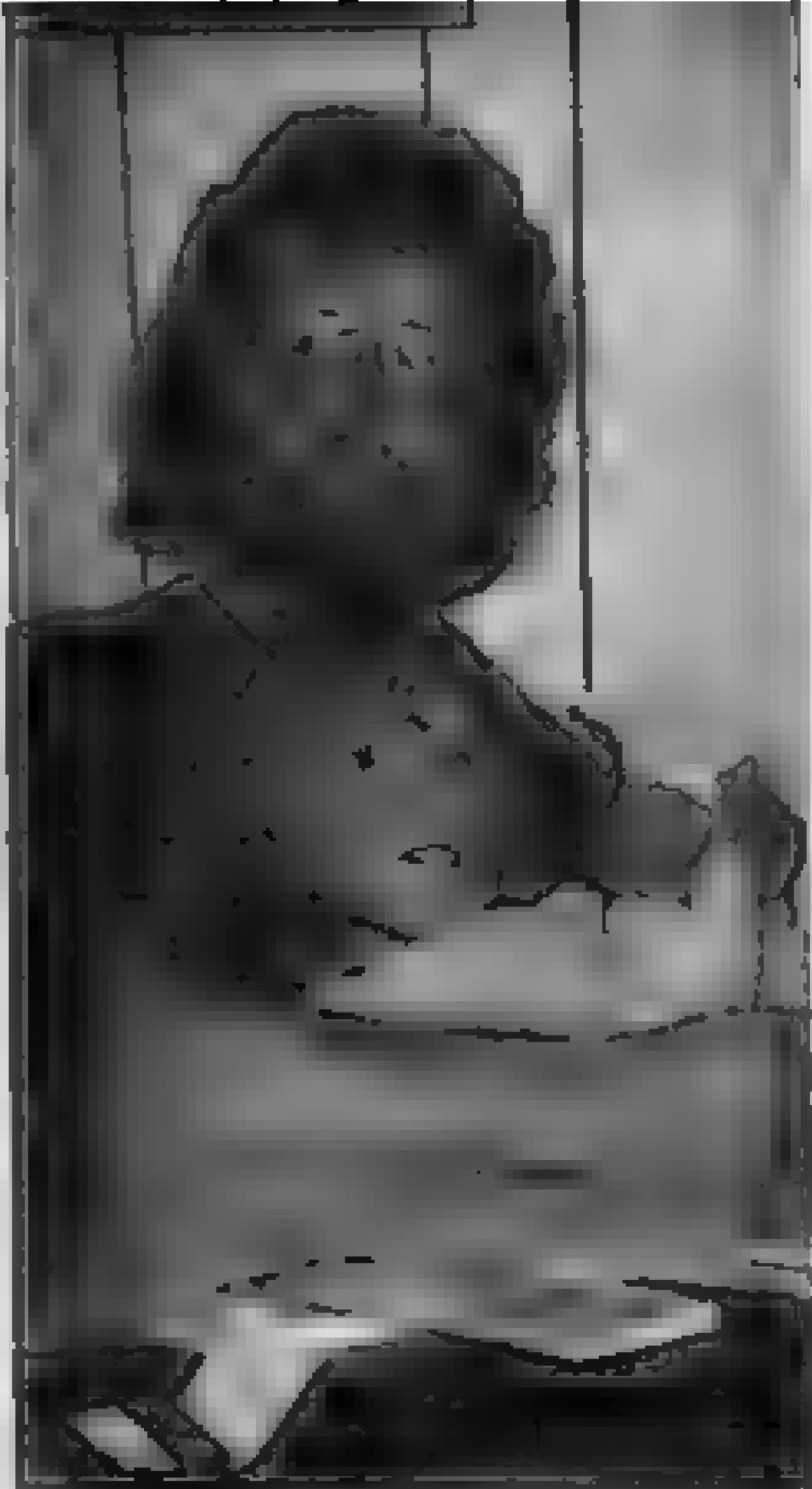
And, I had the most fun with **THE BLOB**, **BRAIN DAMAGE**, **KILLER KLOWNS** and **STAGE FRIGHT**.

RED: Got a parting message to the blood brothers?

SB: For a postscript, to anyone out there reading this and who shares my sentiments-man, go out there and make a movie, write a story that's going to reverse the waves of mediocrity. The young people who are into this stuff and who have new thoughts in their heads that they don't see others putting on the screen or on paper, go out and do it. The future of the genre is in your hands.

RED: Maybe a quote from **ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW** is appropriate here: "Don't dream it, be it."

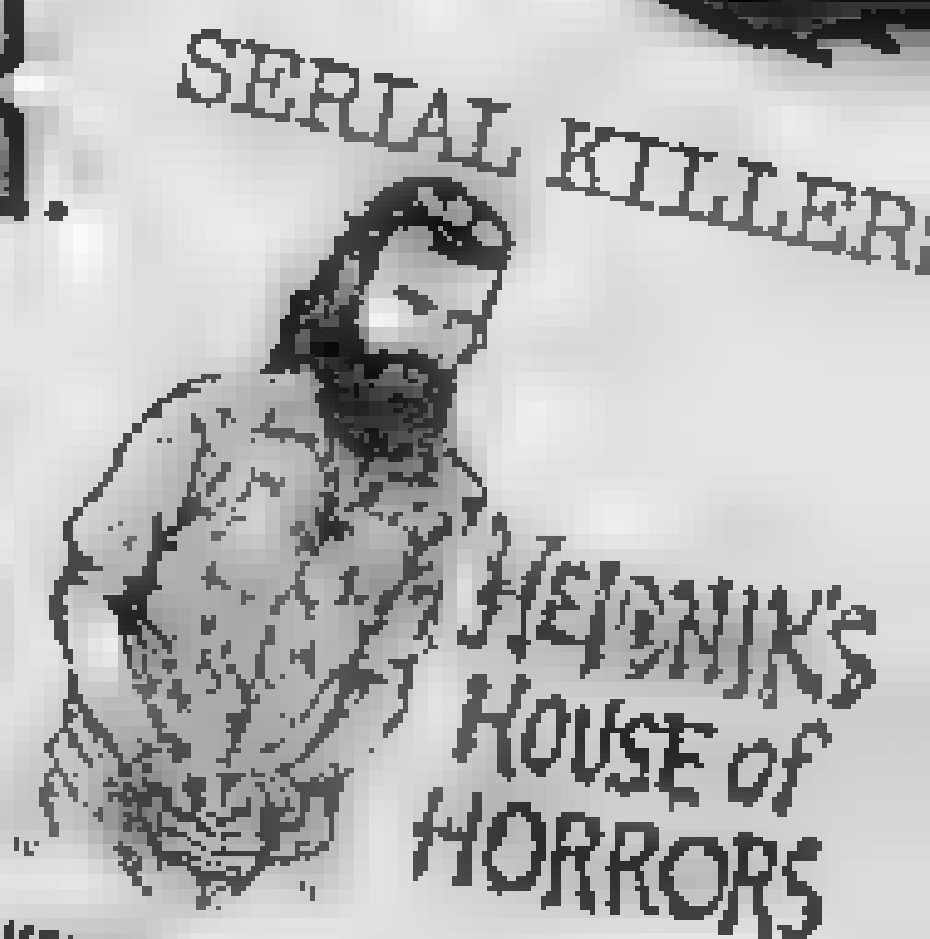
Yeh, don't dream it, be it, but don't be the mass murderer, put it down on paper or on film instead.



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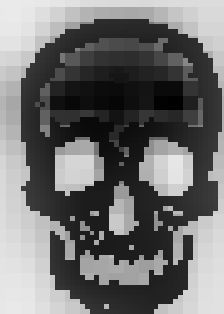
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HERE'S BLOOD IN YOUR EYE!



BY DENNIS DANIEL

WRITER OF THE WALKING DEAD



WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME
YOU HAD THE SHIT SCARED
OUT OF YOU?

"Horror" A day never passes without the word "horror" emitting from my lips. I surround myself with all things horrific. In my home, I proudly display framed original paintings, drawings, sketches, watercolors and comic book pages, all of a horrific nature. In my studio and office at WBAB Radio (a rock station I write and produce for), I have framed movie posters from *RE-ANIMATOR*, *FROM BEYOND*, *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, *DAWN OF THE DEAD*, *REDNECK ZOMBIES* and more. Photos of myself with TOM SAVINI, GEORGE ROMERO, HARLAN ELLISON and more grace the walls. Goreknobs are displayed with honor, causing many an unapointed horror fan and coworker to pause and say, "Dennis, you're one sick fuck!" (Ah, to be called a "sick fuck" by one of the great horror unwashed! What an honor!) When I show friends and family copies of *DEEP RED*, the magazine I joyfully write for, they stare at me and shake their heads. Do any of these situations sound familiar to you, my brethren? Are you really "into" it? Then the word "horror" must be a daily part of your vocabulary as well. Put 'er there pal!

Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary defines the word horror thusly: a painful emotion of fear, dread, and abhorrence; a shuddering with terror and loathing; a feeling caused by something frightful and shocking; something that

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and what
will be
left of
them?

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bizarre and
brutal crimes!



THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

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causes intense mental aversion or positive suffering. Yep, that's horror alright! Now, think a minute. When was the last time you TRULY felt this engaging human emotion while sitting in a movie theatre? I'm not talking to anyone reading this that may have just found a copy lying around the house and wondered "What's Junior reading now?" I'm not talking to someone who is just flipping through the mag because the cover grossed them out. I'm talking to you, Bunky, the true, flesh-and-blood, no-holds-barred, ever-lovin' horror fanatic.

When was the last time you were scared shitless, huh? You see, it's easy for filmmakers to scare Joe Blow and Company with crap like the *ELM STREET*, *FRIDAY THE 13TH* and *POLTERGEIST* sequels (not to mention all the non-sequel garbage floating around

out there) because they don't follow the genre. They're not "into" it like we are. They don't even know who the fuck Tom Savini is! ("Dennis, who's that guy with the mustache in that picture with you? It looks like Juan Valdez. Were you at a Columbian Coffee TV shoot?") We, on the other hand, live and breath this shit night and day. Like drug addicts, we've built up a tolerance to horror. Not many film FX impress us anymore. We've seen it all! Can a film get much grosser than *DAY OF THE DEAD*? I think not. Besides, "gross" or "gore" doesn't always fall hand in hand with "horror." Just because an image "repels" me, doesn't mean it "scares" me. For example, in the made-for-video film *THE RIPPER* (a project Tom Savini regrets getting involved with), we see a graphic disembowelment that takes place right before our eyes, in that "you were there" video

immediacy. No cuts. No edits. THE RIPPER kills a prostitute by slashing her throat. He then rips off her dress and plunges a knife through her navel, up to her chin. He reaches into her and pulls out her intestines, lovingly wrapping them around her head. I tell ya, gang, even an old horror vet like myself was sickened by the sight. It was too fucking real for me, man. Call me a wimp if you want, but I hit the fast forward button. Yes, I was repelled. No, I wasn't scared.

So, the question remains. When was the last time you were truly scared? I'd like to tell you about the films that have scared me over the years. Hopefully, they did the same thing to you. Perhaps, by looking at truly frightening films, we can sort out the shit from shinola that the money hungry, "big time" film producers have been shoveling our way (ripping us off in the process). Plus, if you've never seen any of the films I'm about to mention, you'll seek them out to experience "horror" in every sense of the word.

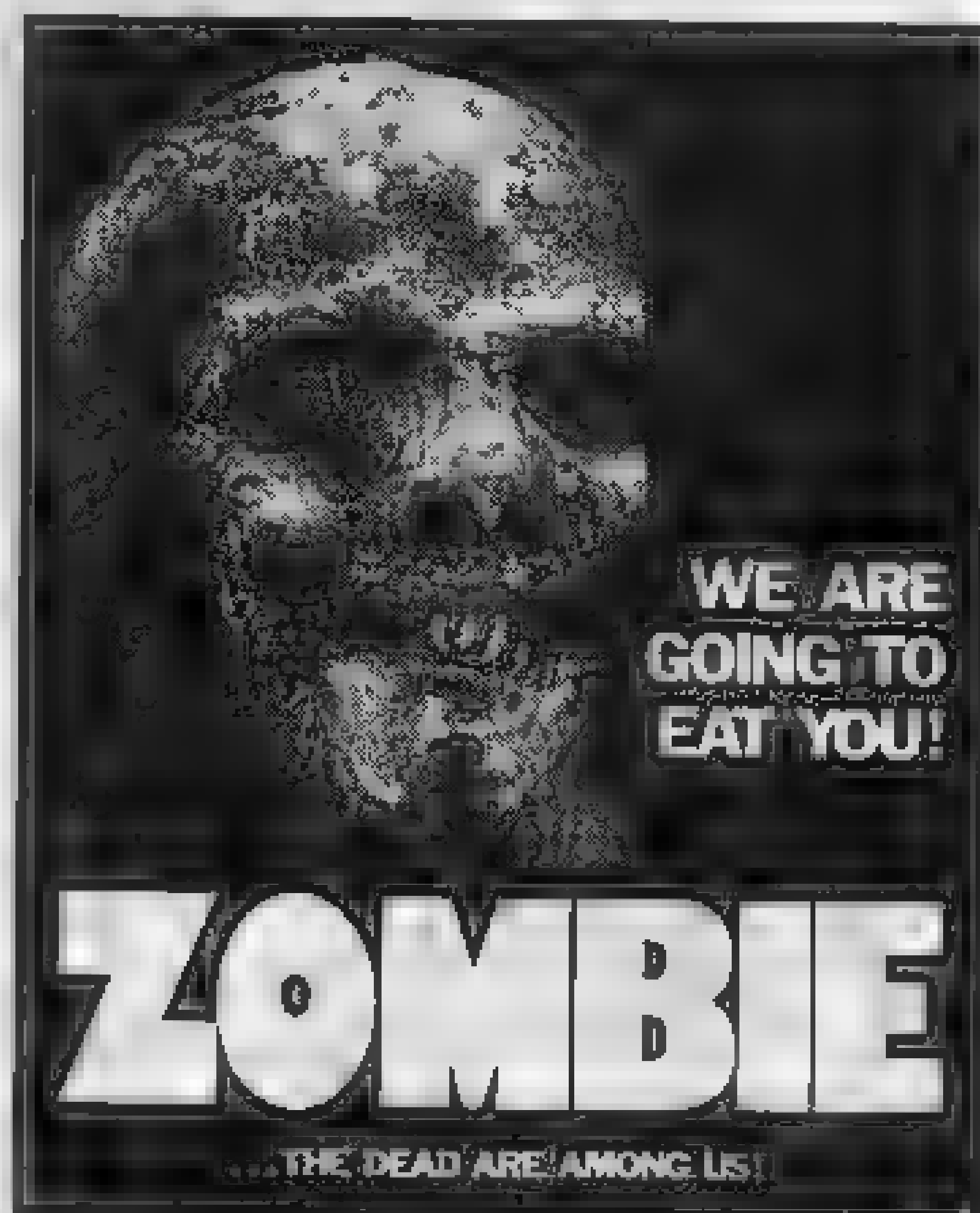
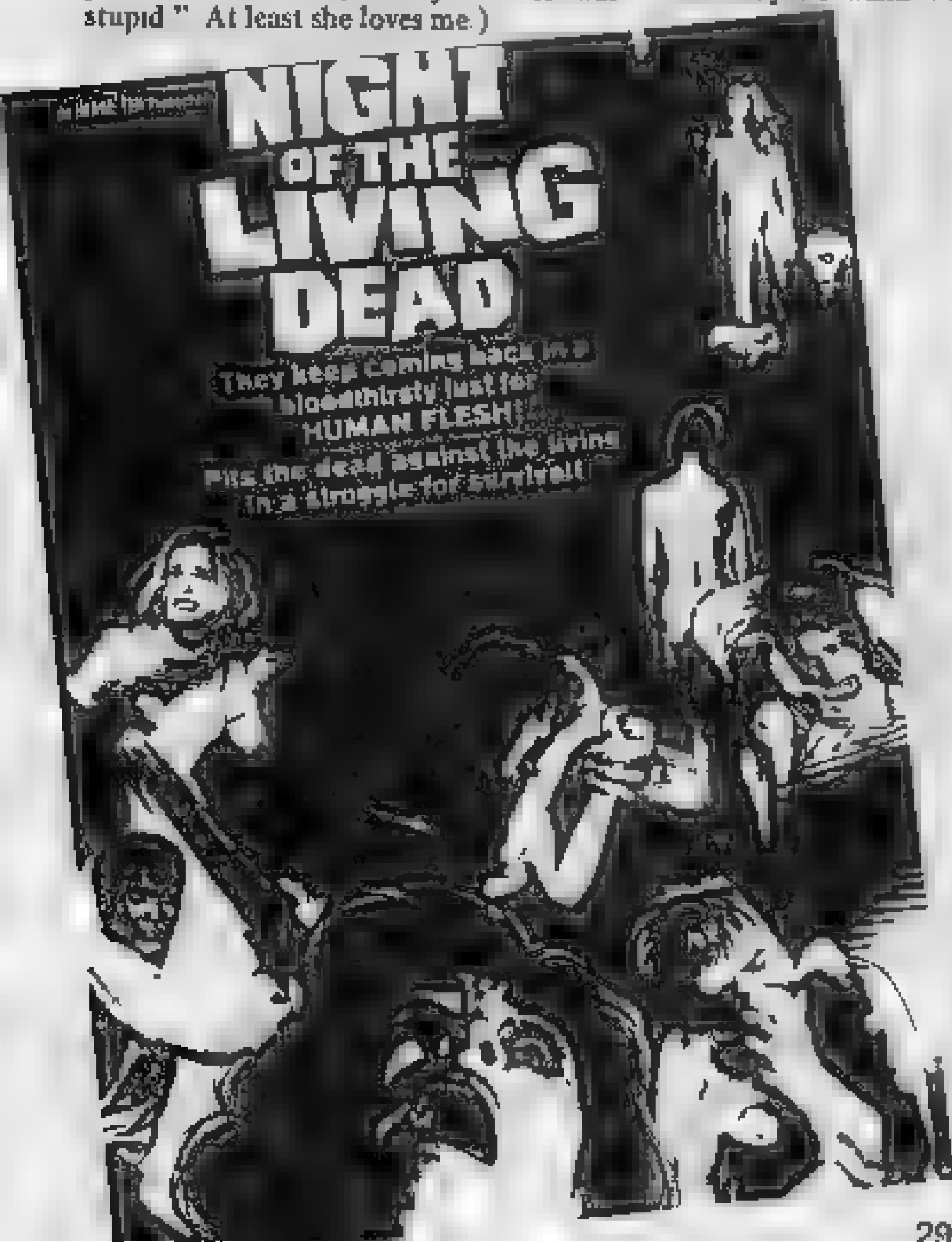
Bear in mind that part of the fun of being scared by a horror film is the viewer's ability to suspend belief. If you get stuck in a "shit like this doesn't happen" mode (like so many non-horror fans do), story lines become "stupid" (A term my wife uses all the time. "How did you like the film, honey?" "It was stupid." At least she loves me.)

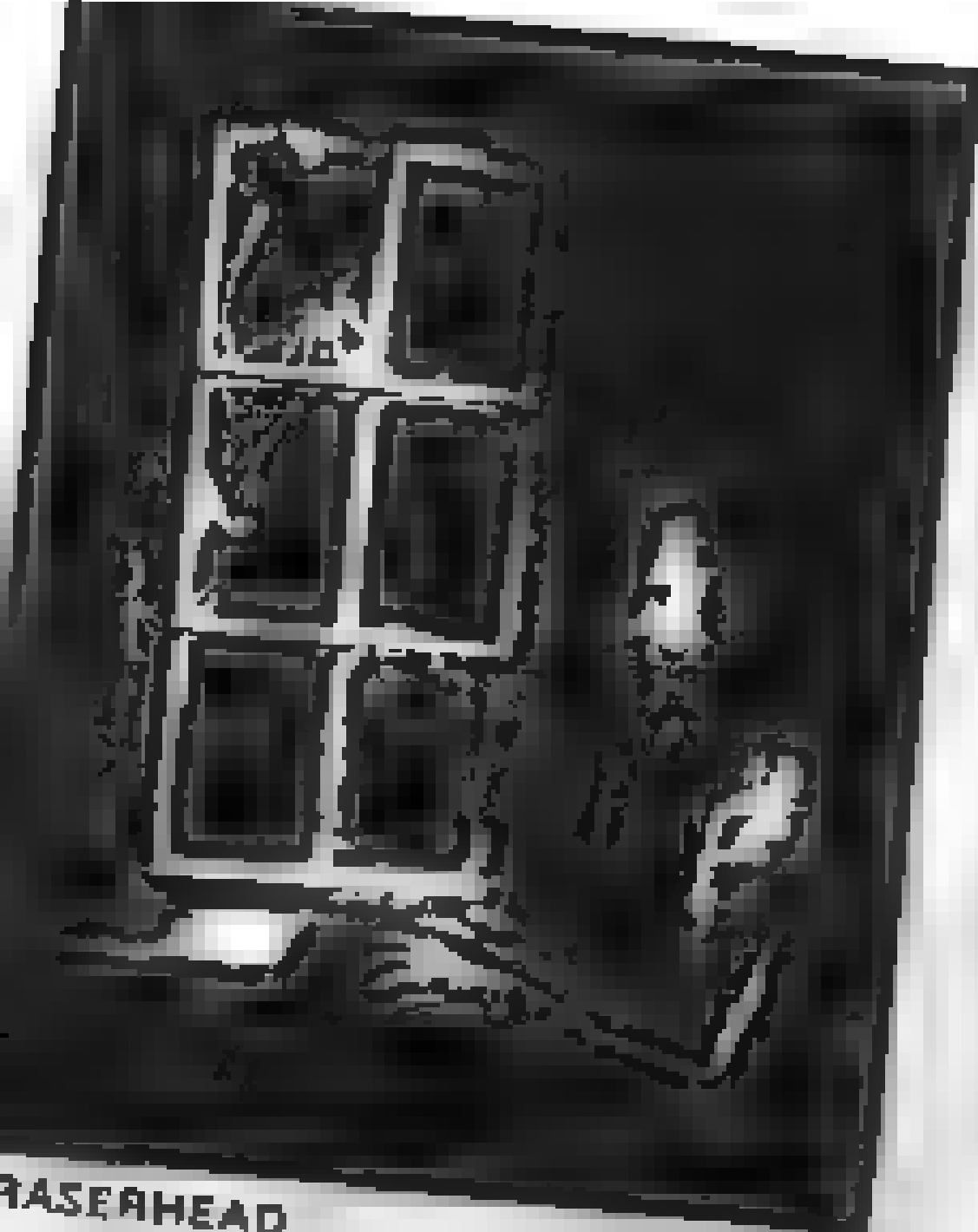
I mention this viewer mind set because it is essential if you're going to view the first film on my list, the 1921 silent classic NOSFERATU. Most people can't stand silent films. They find it hard to sit for two hours looking at visuals with music. Be that as it may, NOSFERATU is unlike any silent film ever made. Over 60 years later, it's still a killer! The kind of film you feel uneasy watching alone. Maybe because it is a silent film, NOSFERATU chills the bone with this other-worldly, spooky quality that makes you feel like they filmed it as it was actually happening. (Have you ever seen old crusty black-and-white photos of your great-grandmother standing next to a table with a vase, staring straight ahead with a bemused ghostly expression that really bends your head? You think, "People looked like this?" That's the feeling I get watching NOSFERATU. It's like an old cobweb from the attic that you can't get off your face!) Mind you, I get this feeling just looking at the straight characters. When Max Schreck (what a name!) shows up as the batlike Count Orlock (what a name, again!), the chills multiply tenfold! It is the visage of Schreck as Orlock that frightens me the most. Seeing him rise from his coffin like a stiff board, rising upward at an angle, with that long, buttoned coat, is really an eye popper. The way he walks with his coffin under

his arm through the darkened streets, the scenes on the ship, the way he stares from afar at the heroine, all these images and more make NOSFERATU truly horrifying. The fact that it was made in Germany and considered a lost film for many years only adds to its frightening qualities. NOSFERATU. I dare you to watch it alone, on a stormy night, at 2:00 A.M. Horror!

Going by decades, I noticed there weren't many films from the '30's, '40's, or '50's that I still find scary. Films like FRANKENSTEIN, DRACULA, THE WOLF MAN, etc. had an initial impact on me as a child (as I'm sure they did for all of us), but as I got older, I enjoyed them more for the memories of fear, rather than pure fear itself. Mind you, I'm not knocking these films! I ADORE THEM! From every classic to every low-budget piece of shit. Do they still scare me? No. There are, however, a few films from those periods that still make me squirm in my chair.

ISLAND OF THE LOST SOULS (1932) is still a kick-ass horror outing that delivers the chilly goods. The concept (based on H.G. Wells' The Island of Dr. Moreau) in and of itself is mind-blowing. When we first get a look at the "Dogman's" furry ear, (in close-up) we know we're not in for the usual "monster" horror concept. The entire film oozes with this sort of "soft focus"





RASERHEAD

feeling of dread and sorrow. Charles Laughton is superb in his macabre portrayal of Dr. Moreau. The famous "What is the Law" scene looks like a living nightmare. Even Bela Lugosi (who plays the "Sayer of the Law") sends a chill up your spine as he howls in agony, "Not men! Not Beast! THINGS!" The storyline of an evil mad doctor performing graft experiments that slowly turn animals into humans was so bizarre for '30's audiences, the film was banned in many places.

I couldn't find any films from the '40's that still gave me a fright rush. As I said before, there are many classics as well as low-budget bombs from this period, all of which I enjoy but none of which still scares me.

There are two films from the '50's that still pack quite a horror wallop in my book. The first is a 1955 French film, **DIABOLIQUE**. This is a murder/horror ghost story that'll make ya shit! It's also one of those films that should not have the plot discussed. All I can tell you is it takes place at a French Boys' School, run by a wicked man, his beautiful, long-suffering wife, and his mistress. The ending will FLOOR YOU! I guarantee it.

The second film is another French production from 1959 **EYES WITHOUT A FACE** (aka **HORROR CHAMBER OF DR. FAUSTUS**). It's another "mad doctor" film about a plastic surgeon who kills young women, removes the skin from their faces (we actually get to see this!), and grafts the skin onto his disfigured daughter's face. The grafts work for a few days, then crumble. In order to get around without fucking people's heads up, the girl wears this eerie looking white mask that makes her look like a mannequin. Because she has such large eyes, the wax mask takes on a life of its own. Once again, the ending is a stunner! And the cinematography is outstanding. (The scenes of the girl wandering around in a daze are particularly memorable.)

Which brings us to the 1960's. There are four films in this period that still glue me to my chair in horror. The first is the 1960 classic **PEEPING TOM**. Much has been written and said about British Director Michael Powell's disturbing look into the mind of a murderer. I don't want to tread over already covered ground, so just take my word for it, **PEEPING TOM** is a must-see. It grabs you by the gonads and never lets go.

The second film from the '60's is **CARNIVAL OF SOULS** (1962). This is truly one of the most original and horrifying films I've ever seen. Made on a shoestring budget by independent film maker Herk Harvey in Lawrence, Kansas, **CARNIVAL OF SOULS** takes you on a journey through the mind of a dead soul. A woman gets into a car accident. Her car falls off a bridge, into a lake. Eventually, she walks out of the water a bit stunned, but seemingly alright. She is a church organ player by trade. As she goes about her daily business, she experiences all kinds of strange visions and stimuli as she plays the organ. She sees apparitions of ghost-like zombie people, doing a dance of death within the confines of a carnival. She is haunted by a visage of one white-faced man (played by Director Harvey) who follows her and shows up in unlikely places. Sometimes all sound around her stops and she walks the world in silence, ignored by everyone. To tell any more would be to give away the ending. This film always makes me uneasy. The low-budget, black-and-white photography adds to the mood. It has that bizarre sense of realism you find in films like **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**. It also features a cast of unknowns, adding to its "out of sink" atmosphere. This film is a real mind fuck. Director Harvey does a lot of strange things with film speed, point-of-view shots, and soundtrack. Original. Frightening. Horror, babe, horror.

The third film from the '60's decade is a neat little chiller diller that plugs into everyone's fear of weird looking dolls. **DEVIL DOLL** (1963) always showed up on TV around 3:00 A.M. and scared the bejezus out of me every time. It's the story of a ventriloquist who takes the soul of his partner and puts it inside his dummy. That's really all you need to know. The dummy has this really fucked-up facial expression, unlike any dummy I've seen before or since. Once again, it's in black-and-white, adding to the eeriness and it has a haunting, throbbing soundtrack that really sets the mood. There's a real tense scene where the dummy gets up off of his master's lap and walks out to the end of the stage to take a bow. The mood it creates is quite uncanny. Throughout the film you can feel the tension between the dummy and his master. It's genuine and it's scary as hell.

The last film from the '60's is the one and only **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**. Volumes have been written about this film by now, so I won't discuss it. You've seen it. You know. As far as my own fear is concerned, it's the dreadful feeling of claustrophobia pervading the film that still makes me twitch. That hopeless sense of **NO WAY OUT!** Plus the fact that none of the doomed people can get along with one another! Whether by accident or skill, Romero created a timeless masterpiece of horror that, like its zombies, will never die. (By the way, if you haven't seen this film, what are you doing here?)

The horror films of the '70's hold a special place in my heart. I was a teenager all through that decade and got to experience most of the films I'm about to mention firsthand where it counts—in the darkened sanctity of the movie theatre.





NIGHTMARE

MÖRDERISCHE TRÄUME

First and foremost is Tobe Hooper's **THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE**. To this date, Tobe has NEVER topped this one, man. The film is **HELL ON EARTH!** An uncompromising banquet of the bizarre that shatters every nerve. Son of a bitch, this film is intense beyond words.

My second choice from the '70's is going to seem winpy to some. It's Steven Spielberg's 1975 film, **JAWS**. (I'll bet ol' Steve never thought he'd get his name in **DEEP RED**. Rest easy, Steve, the deed is done. Your life now is fulfilled.) To this day, I'm still afraid of deep water. (The fact that I live on Long Island and the story takes place there doesn't help.) Who could forget when that shark first rears its ugly head as Roy Scheider scooped out that "chum"? I still jump out of my seat! I cringe when "Bruce" swallows Robert Shaw whole, with all that torn-up meat and shit all over its teeth. Quite impressive.

How about the film **ERASERHEAD** (1976)? I found it to be one of the most frightening, surrealistic films I've ever seen. David Lynch, through the use of stunning black-and-white cinematography

creates a nightmare world where nothing makes sense. You get paranoid just watching the film. Many dismiss it as a load of bullshit, but I disagree. I feel this movie as I watch it. Unique.

ALIEN (1979) has been called the first big-budget "splatter" movie. To this day, it's a riveting viewing experience. I guess one of the reasons this film is so frightening is its horrific originality. (Yes, I know it's been compared to **IT!** **THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE** but c'mon! It's got much more going for it!) Of course, the famous "chest burst" scene with John Hurt is a splatter classic. A real shocker for 1979 and still powerful today. **ALIEN** has so many scenes, concepts and FX that had never been realized before. And tension? Sheesh! Not to mention the awe-inspiring H.R. Giger's design work. It's been copied by everyone ever since. A real groundbreaking, scary-as-shit movie! Did it do you in too?

My final choice from the '70's is Lucio Fulci's **ZOMBIE**. This 1979 splatter opus has the scariest looking fuckin' zombies I've ever seen! The middle drags along, but the beginning

and end hit home hard. I gotta tell ya, gang, even though the film's got gore-a-plenty, it's the zombies that give me the willies. They're decrepit, bloated, ugly, slobbering, bloodcaked, walking nightmares. God, they bug me out! Plus, there's all that moaning going on. Horror, amigos.

Now, we come to the 1980's. My first choice has got to be 1982's **THE THING!** Egad! The Horror. The Horror. We're talkin' sick shit here, my brethren. FX that go above and beyond what any normal human mind can deal with. The film is astounding! You're all going to laugh at my sorry ass, but I couldn't watch this film for several years! I was going through a really bad trip (if you know what I mean) at the time I first saw the film and it profoundly affected me. Being a horror fan, I thought I'd seen everything, but this. THIS was beyond comprehension! Rob Bottin's FX will never, I repeat NEVER, be topped! I just watched it again the other night. Horrifying. Fantastic.

THE EVIL DEAD (1982) is another groundbreaking achievement that bent my noggin in a BIG way. The scene that

stays with me the most is when the possessed teen stabs himself in the back with a severed hand, screaming in agony. That image...the way it looked...wow. Never seen anything like that before. Sam Rami pulls no punches with this sack pup of a movie. It scared me but good! (I know some people who think this movie is hysterical. I agree there's some humor, but golly gee, am I a dick for not finding it funny? Don't answer that.)

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (1984) presented us with an image of pure evil. A child murderer. Man, there ain't nothin' more low down than a child murderer. You have to give Wes Craven credit. Freddy Krueger's image...the scarred face and body (the result of vengeance on the part of the parents of his victims), the glove of knives, the voice. All of these make Freddy unforgettable. (I'm talkin' about the first film only! Once the Hollywood big wigs got hold of Fred, he became a fuckin' buffoon. A marketing tool. The three sequels suck. Period. The end.) Craven's film is fresh and inventive both in concept and design. Best of all, it's scary as hell! My wife can't watch it. I can, but I have to hold my Pee Wee Herman doll. (Honest, I do find it quite frightening.)

BURIAL GROUND (1985) is another Italian zombie film that scares me for the same reasons **ZOMBIE** does those righteous zombies! The whole film looks like it was dipped in blood. It has this strange aura to it. I can't quite put my finger on it, but when you see it, you will know what I mean. It's got plenty of maggot-infested zombies walking around, tearing everyone to shreds. **NO ONE** lives. Strange.

The last film from this decade that gave me the chills was David Lynch's **BLUE VELVET** (1986). Dennis Hopper is the sickest, most demented crazed motherfucker ever portrayed in a "mainstream" film. My guts were in knots whenever he appeared on screen. The way he screams, "Don't you **FUCKIN'** look at me!" Yikes! Let me outta' here! **BLUE VELVET** blew me away!

Well, gang, that's it. Mind you, this is MY list of what scares me. Some of you will agree others will think I'm totally fucked! Please understand I love all horror movies. I just wanted you to know where my fear levels doth lie. What's scary to one may not be scary to the other.

If you haven't seen some of the films I've mentioned, seek them out. You'll find them, at the very least, entertaining.

By the way, when was the last time you had the shit scared out of you? Hmmm?

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THE DEEP RED

HORROR

HANDBOOK

BY CHAS. BALUN



HEADHUNTER (1984)

A Michael Slade

P New American Library, 420 p



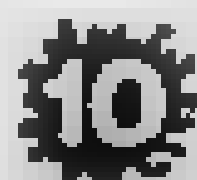
Robert (PSYCHO) Bloch called this book "the most gruesome I have ever read." Don't believe it for a minute. Ol' Bob must not be reading much these days because this one's splatter quotient is just slightly beyond a PG-13. Sure, the cops find a few decapitated heads impaled upon some poles in what appears to be a series of ritualistic voodoo sayings, but the meaty moistness is kept to a minimum. The book's main strength, however, lies in the acid, straight-ahead powerhouse prose of author Slade. Actually, Michael Slade is a pseudonym used by three Canadian lawyers who specialize in the field of criminal insanity and their expertise shines right through this reasonably fast, gripping police thriller. Gratuitous gore is jettisoned in favor of a sober, no-nonsense approach to police procedures, forensic pathology and evidence analysis. The characters are clearly drawn, well developed and engaging though the authors are mighty stungy when it comes to revealing any telling clues which might help the reader guess the killer's identity. No matter though. This technique of withholding information pays off in spades at the end as the book climaxes with a cracker-jack denouement that is bound to leave you both exhausted and completely surprised. Pretty impressive freshman effort by a team of writers who've obviously been there up close, personal, and deep inside the criminal mind.

C. Balun

THE SCREAM (1983)

A John Skipp & Craig Spector

P Bantam Books, 420 p



My first thought when I finished reading THE SCREAM was, "I finally got through it." The novel was drawn out much too long and there were far too many characters being introduced in each chapter. Sounds like a bad review, huh? Well, beyond all that complaining I did somehow like the book. Skipp and Spector do know how to unravel a story plot. They weave you in and out, finally laying everything on the table. The gore and gruesome details are not held back and go straight for the jugular (You are two sick puppies and I love you for it). It's not a book you quickly run through. Instead read it slowly, let it soak in, and it will finally win you over.

G Parsons

FLOATER (1988)

A Gary Brandner

P Ballantine Books, 295 p



Here is yet another Gary Brandner novel

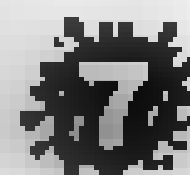
Not since THE HOWLING has he had a blockbuster hit, but don't fret, he's still trying! Brandner has written many horror novels. Some are fairly decent, but this one fails. FLOATER is about a very nerdy kid named Frazier who can astral project his mind outside of his body. Excuse the expression but "while he's away," he accidentally drowns in a imitation park by three pompous high school brats. The plot thickens. Twenty years pass and now it's time! Frazier's dead but his tormented soul seeks revenge on these now grossly pathetic adults. He invites all three of the assholes back to their hometown for a class reunion. The rest reads just like any other revenge book. They die.

G Parsons

BATS OUT OF HELL (1978)

A Guy N Smith

P The New American Library



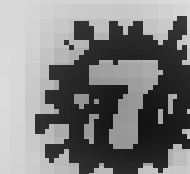
How many books do I have to read and how many endless movies on vampires do I have to see where the bat flies in some unsuspecting female victim's window (she's naked, of course), changes into your basic Hollywood hunk, then goes for the obvious. 'Gimme a break! Aren't we all a little tired of that same old crap? Finally, something new! BATS OUT OF HELL is a refreshing idea. Can you actually imagine having the little winged, rat-like creatures killing people? Not even concerned with sexual gratification or eternal life? Professor Brian Newman, a research scientist, and his beautiful assistant Susan Wylio, set out to determine the difference between bacterial and viral meningitis using bats, because of their high tolerance for the disease. While duplicating the virus, they create a new mutated form of meningo-coccus. A killer bat! When the "Devil's Pets" are accidentally released from their cages, they set out on a violent killing spree. Even the slightest touch of one of these creatures will cause extreme symptoms starting with headaches followed by vomiting, deteriorating of body tissue, and, finally, death. But, death doesn't come quickly. Guy has a way of slowly tormenting his readers with all of the step-by-step details. BATS OUT OF HELL was published in 1978. This book might be hard to find but it's well worth the effort!

G Parsons

TOY CEMETERY (1987)

A William W Johnstone

P Kensington Publishing, 412 p



Shoot them off the press as fast as you can! William W Johnstone, along with a whole string of "bubblegum" writers, including Ruby Jean Jensen, J.N. Williamson, Matthew J Costello, etc.,

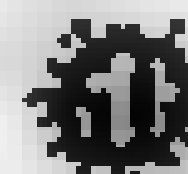
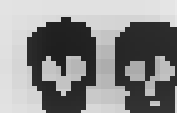
all tend to write mediocre novels. They are all predictable with the same style and format. Are you sure you're not all the same person hiding behind numerous fictitious names? TOY CEMETERY is one of the better of the group. Call me brain dead, but I do tend to love books dealing with grossly juvenile slaughters! As often as these books are being shot out, it occurred to me that perhaps Stephen King had gone and changed his name again!

G Parsons

MANIAC (1987)

A Stuart Friedman

P Dorchester Publishing, 365 p




From the tormented, screaming man on the cover to the short synopsis on the back and inside cover of the book, I thought I was in for a real spine-breaking experience. Not true. MANIAC takes you on a demented roller coaster ride through one man's twisted hell. He lives in a world tortured by his past and can't distinguish between what's real or fantasy. Believe me, it's all very confusing. Paul Borland, who gave himself up to the police after sexually assaulting and mutilating four college coeds, is sent to a federal mental health rehabilitation program. While in Shaunaataakee State Hospital, he undergoes grueling tests and finally a lobotomy, supposedly making him suitable for society. He is given a new name and identity, Joel Danton, marries a cello player named Pam, and begins to live a "normal" life. When Pam leaves on a concert tour, all hell breaks loose. Paul believes he is going insane again. Depressed and lonely, he goes out and kills several women, only to wake up and find that it's all been a nightmare. Although there are some interesting moments, I found it annoying to always end up in a dream sequence. Up until the last page, you're not sure what is going on. Is it real or was it all make believe? You decide!

G Parsons





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Think fast, what do the following have in common? A priest with a face full of puke. A seedy detective on a pop singer's trail keeps finding dead bodies. A demon child is born of a human woman. Bloody masturbation with a crucifix. Strangulation by rosary. Guilt, blood and sin. Redemption by suffering.

Armageddon, the Anti-Christ, the Apocalypse, the Devil.

These are just some of the ingredients of an entire sub-genre of horror films involving the iconography, the dogma, the rituals and the prophecies of the Catholic church.

Wracked with guilt, drenched in blood, cluttered with crucifixes and populated by dour priests, feverish nuns and backsliding laymen, this is the world of the Catholic horror film. An area we call Mass Horror.

What is it about the Catholic church that keeps filmmakers coming back again and again for inspiration, for background and for atmosphere? For instance, when was the last time you saw a horror movie with a Jewish setting? You have to go way back to *THE GOLEM* and its remakes. With the real horror of the Holocaust still in memory maybe monsters and vampires don't seem too scary in a Jewish setting. And what would a Jewish exorcism be like? "Meshhuga demon! Out of the shiksa! And no more kvetching about hell, you want hell? Oy vay!"

Buddhism makes an appearance in lots of Asian horror movies, but usually in a pretty benign context. Protestantism seems a little too bland for horror material—not much there.

So, with Catholicism, for starters, there's the blood. No other church seems to emphasize blood like the Roman Catholic church. Their crucifixes are the bloodiest and most sadistic. Christ is always portrayed as gaunt and suffering for our sins.

Catholics believe that the host and the wine turn into the flesh and the blood of Christ. This makes the Catholic church the largest official blood cult in the world. And you must be washed in the blood to obtain absolution for your sins. In lots of Catholic horror movies that is just what happens.

There's the dogma of the Catholic church. You are born guilty and sinful and that's it. And you'll pay for that guilt and sin. With everybody guilty and sinful and easily led to temptation, evil is that much closer to victory in the all-out war with good.

Let's not forget the look of the Catholic church. Cameras linger over suffering Christs, beatific Marys and blessed infants. Statues are surrounded by candles, gothic ceilings vault into infinity and shadows stretch into every corner.

Always there are priests and nuns. What horror film would be the same

MASS HORROR

Cruelty, Carnage, & Christianity

BY SAM MOFFITT



without them? Stern, self-righteous, clad all in black and, most importantly, celibate. Because the pleasures of the flesh will get you into trouble every time!

Christian imagery has always played a part in horror films. Lugosi's *DRACULA* was repulsed by crosses and holy water. James Whale crucified Frankenstein's monster in *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. Later in the same film, Karloff's weary monster finds some moments of respite under a blind hermit's crucifix. In Val Lewton's *CAT PEOPLE*, Simone Simon keeps a small statue of a saint credited with almost wiping out her race of Croatian shape-shifters.

Let's not forget the influence of the Catholic church on the mainstream and

European art cinema. Filmmakers as diverse as Luis Bunuel, Alfred Hitchcock, Martin Scorsese and Federico Fellini show a tremendous Catholic influence as well as many moments of horror.

So, let's take a look at some of the major and minor films in this fascinating sub-genre of horror films.

The seminal work is **ROSEMARY'S BABY** (Roman Polanski, 1968). Rosemary is a lapsed Catholic with an ambitious husband. Good material for Satan's mommy and pretty plaything of a particularly ridiculous devil cult. Inspired a whole slew of demon children movies and one lousy TV movie sequel.

THE EXORCIST (William Friedkin, 1973). The granddaddy of Catholic horror movies and the greasy yardstick against which all corners are measured. Also one of the most popular movies of any kind. Inspired an avalanche of sequels, most of them Italian and terrible. Popularized sayings like "The sow is mine fuck me, fuck me!" and "Your mother sucks cocks in hell!"

Major themes are guilt (Father Karras can't get his exorcism up and calls in reinforcements) and repression (Regan is the symbol for all the hippie/demon children who were acting up in the early '70's). In this and all other exorcist/Catholic horror films any sign of non-conformity is to be ruthlessly stamped out.

THE OMEN (Richard Donner, 1976), **DAMIEN, OMEN II** (Don Taylor, 1978), and **THE FINAL CONFLICT** (Graham Baker, 1981). Make way for the Anti-Christ, The Beast, Mr 666. The first **OMEN** was great at the box office and the first splatter movie that many mundane Americans even went to see. Still the best beheading by a sheet of glass in movie history. Basically a demon child/**ROSEMARY'S BABY** rip-off, but with sequels so we can see the little monster grow up and fuck up his own plans for world domination. Also had lots of imitators and generated lots of talk, most of it stupid.

CARRIE (Brian DePalma, 1976). Sissy Spacek's pussy blood and vaginal juices kick in her latent telekinesis. Religious fanatic Mom Piper Laurie hates it. A bucket of pig's blood dumped on Carrie at the high school prom and instant Armageddon. Later Mom gets crucified with kitchen implements while a weird looking crucifix looks on. First and last on-screen death by potato peeler.

ANGEL HEART (Alan Parker, 1986). The best of the recent bunch. Mickey O'Rourke (so sleazy you can smell his



stinky armpits and see the boogers in his nose) goes looking for pop singer Johnny Favorite and finds bodies, blood, voodoo and eternal damnation instead. A great, delicious fever dream of whirling fans, vertiginous staircases, flowing blood, Lisa Bonet's tits and ass and descending elevators. Private Eye Johnny Angel goes down, way down, for the long count.

The Inquisition makes for great horror and points out the absurdity of using the Catholic church as a model of "good" behavior. Any religion with such a past must be suspect in a horror film.

In **MARK OF THE DEVIL** (Michael Armstrong, 1969) and **MARK OF THE DEVIL, PART II** (Adrian Hoven, 1972) the real horror of the Catholic church is on grisly display in all its authentic glory. Ripped-out tongues, spilled guts, red-hot

pokers up the ass and pinched penises are the true sacraments of the Catholic church.

In **THE DEVILS** (Ken Russell, 1971), a convent's sexual frustration leads to hallucinations, spastic fits, running around naked and good Middle Ages box office as the "possessed" nuns become quite an attraction. This, of course, leads to torture, mutilation and an enema for Vanessa Redgrave (did anyone ever need one more?). Oliver Reed gets burnt alive at the stake for no greater crime than being the Mother Superior's masturbatory fantasy.

In Amando de Ossorio's **TOMBS OF THE BLIND DEAD** (1971) and three sequels, the eyeless and undying Knights Templar (a real organization that was really tortured into extinction by the Inquisition) rise from their tombs, mount



WARNING THIS FILM CONTAINS SCENES OF VIOLENCE AND INTENSE HORROR

their slow-motion zombie horses and slaughter Spanish yuppies and drink their blood. So, let's hear it for the **BLIND DEAD!**

In Larry Cohen's brilliant **GOD TOLD ME TO** (1977), we meet Jesus the hit man who only seems like another Manson type. A church-going cop uncovers a cult led by none other than the son of God. In interviews, Cohen has insisted that the Earth-women-impregnated-by-a-UFO plot is meant to be taken seriously. Careful viewing of the movie, however, leads to a different conclusion. If we are to take **GOD TOLD ME TO** at face value, its central message is that the true force for evil and suffering in this world is not the Devil, but rather Jesus Christ and his followers.

In Paul Verhoeven's **THE FOURTH MAN** (1979), alcoholism, cocksucking and crucifixes go hand-in-hand. **THE FOURTH MAN** of the title (well played by Jeroen Krabbe) is convinced a beautiful blonde (Renee Soutendijk) is out to make him her fourth dead husband. In his DT-inspired hallucinations, he is convinced another blonde is the Virgin Mary and can protect him. Is this chump in for a surprise or what?

Both women know each other and the poor drunk Catholic writer ends up in a coma after going bonkers. The "Virgin Mary" is his nurse.

Taken literally, Verhoeven has no use for such religious beliefs. What intelligent, educated person does? In what is probably the most blasphemous scene in any of these films, **THE FOURTH MAN**

imagines a life-sized crucifix has become a young man he particularly wants to bugger. Maybe it's better to butt fuck Jesus than fool around with the femmes fatales in this movie.

In **ALICE, SWEET ALICE** (Alfred Sole, 1977), Brooke Shields gets killed in church and her twin sister is the main suspect. Grisly knife killings, real mystery, Catholic guilt and the funniest child molester you ever saw figure very prominently.

In **THE SENTINEL** (Michael Winner, 1977), Christina Ramnes gets a new job guarding the gates of hell when priest John Carradine has to retire (will he ever do that for real?). She wears a nun's habit on her new job. Beverly DeAngelo masturbates.

In **THE PYX** (Harvey Hart, 1973), dead whore Karen Black has a pyx (holy host dispenser) clutched in her hand. Lapsed Catholic (aren't they all?) cop Christopher Plummer digs up yet another devil cult perverting the true church. He is just as guilty as everyone else.

In Pete Walker's angry and uncompromising **THE CONFESSIONAL** (1975), a deranged priest tapes confessions, uses them for sexual blackmail,ashes in heads with an incense burner, strangles people with a rosary and gives out poisoned communion wafers. And he gets away with it! Here is your church says Mr. Walker and welcome to it.

In **FEAR NO EVIL** (Frank La Loggia, 1981), another misfit teenager is the Anti-Christ. Fortunately, two teenage girls are archangels. A pot smoking boy grows tits and a Passion Play Jesus bleeds for real.

The list of **EXORCIST** imitators is just about endless. In **BEYOND THE DOOR** (Ovidio Assonitis, 1974), Juliet Mills pukes and hates her kids. **BEYOND THE DOOR II** (Mario Bava, 1979) is actually pretty good. It's Mario's last, but doesn't contain much Catholic imagery. In **EXORCISM** (Joan Bosch, 1975), Priest Paul Naschy thinks riding motorcycles and smoking pot are mani-



festations of possession, he's probably right! **THE TEMPTER** (Alberto De Martino, 1974) has great visions of hell with the priests eating demon puke. **HOUSE OF EXORCISM** (Mario Bava, 1975) is Bava's Welles movie, taken away from him. Exorcism scenes, added to Lisa and the Devil, result in a mess. Elke Sommer spits up toads. Robert Alda wears the turned-around collar. Telly Savalas sucks lollipops and gargles with wine. In **THE POSSESSOR** (Elo Pannaccio, 1976), Richard Conte wears the collar. A nun and her blockhead bro are possessed. And, yes, nuns really do shave their heads, but not their pussies. And, finally, **EXORCIST II THE HERETIC** (John Boorman, 1977). Both the worst exorcist movie and the most brave. Boorman's main problem was in having to use Linda Blair in a part that demanded a better actress. Also, too much was crammed into one movie with concepts too difficult to translate into film. A glorious failure with a more complex worldview than all other exorcist movies' simple good vs. evil plots.

Just recently we have **THE SEVENTH SIGN, THE UNHOLY, THE ROSARY MURDERS, THE BELIEVERS** and **THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW** keeping Catholic horror on the nation's movie screens. This particular sub-genre shows no signs of abatement.

In none of these films does the church come off well. Either it is portrayed as purely evil or the contradictions of having the Catholic church (given its history and teachings) stand for good causes the movie to collapse under the weight of its own hypocrisy. Given its history of forced conversions, torturing heretics and brutal schooling methods, the Catholic church really is a poor organization to represent good. Admittedly, there have been few burnings or impalements recently. But, what are we to make of a major religion that still forbids the use of contraceptives in a world already badly overcrowded? What can be said for a religion that inspires believers to whip themselves with cat-o'-nine-tails to expiate their sins?

Catholics in Mexico, the Phillipines, Brazil and even Italy continue to inflict all manner of bizarre self mutilations which the Vatican "officially" condemns. Yet during certain festivals in Brazil, real nails are driven into real flesh on a real cross. Yes, they take their Passion Plays very seriously south of the Border.

If horror movies are about fear (fear of death and sex especially), then the Catholic church is the perfect setting for horror. Stefan Obiowsky's **THE OTHER HELL** (1980) states it in plain language.

A psychotic Mother Superior is busy dissecting a dead nun with a butcher



Alice, Sweet Alice

knife. She tells a horrified postulant that "the vagina is the pathway to hell and the uterus is the breeding ground of demons." So saying, she extracts those very organs to prove her point.

If the wages of sin is death, then death you shall have. In the world of Catholic horror there is plenty of sin, blood, death, guilt and eternal damnation.

So, let us take the host and wine. Confess our sins and cross ourselves in cathedrals dark and dimly lit and take sanctuary in catacombs piled high with the bones and skulls of the martyrs. And, embrace the Mass Horror.



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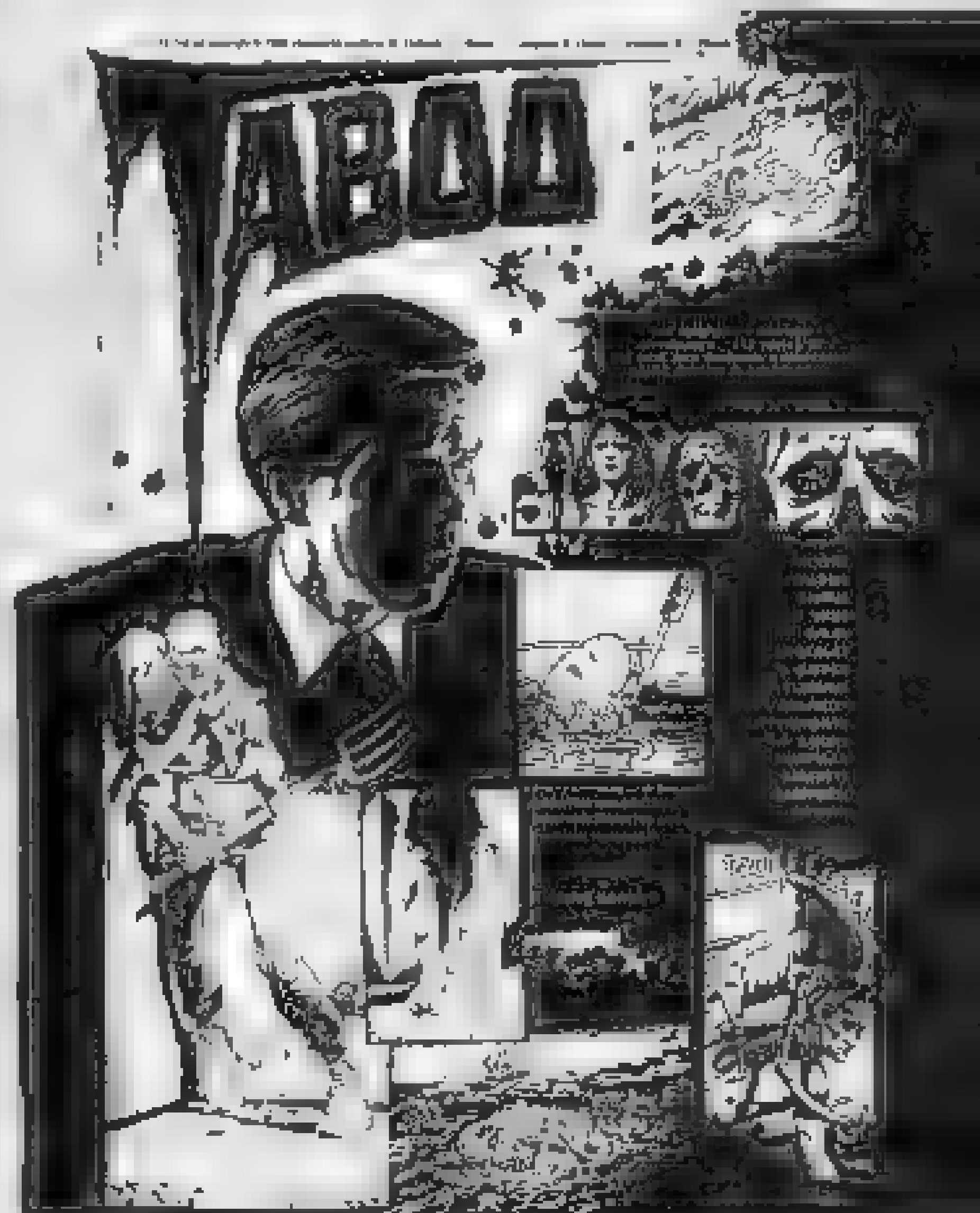
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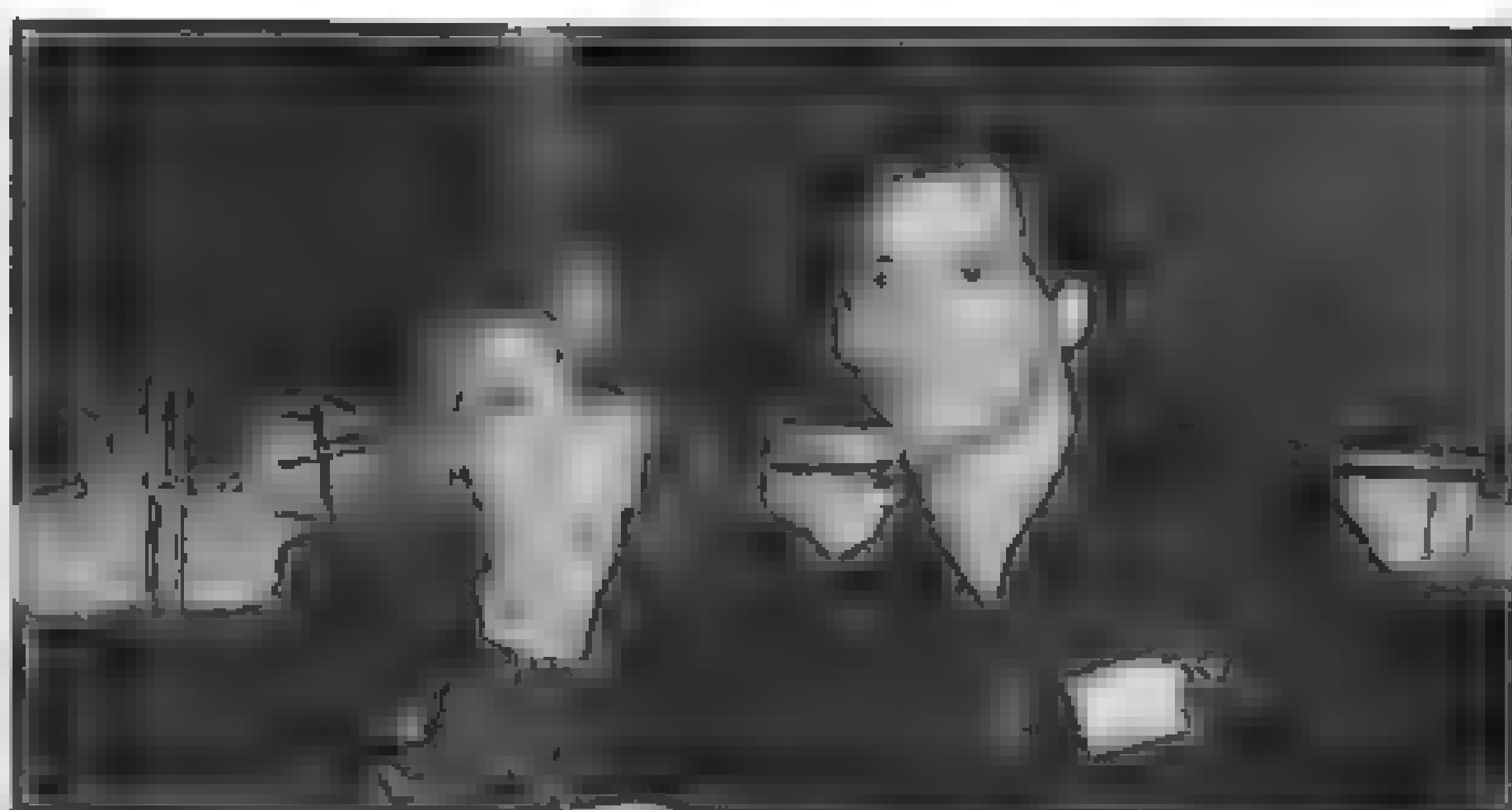
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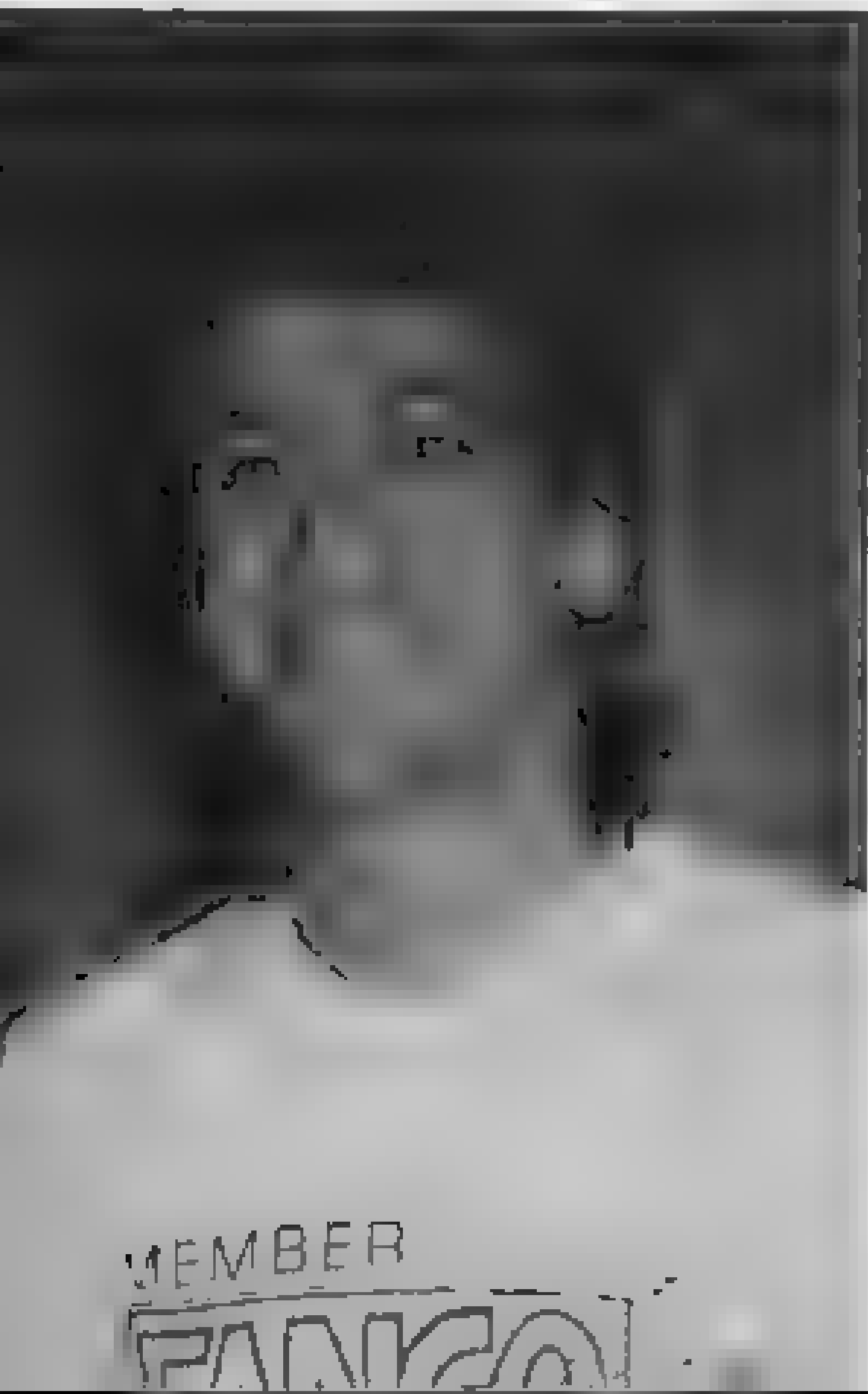
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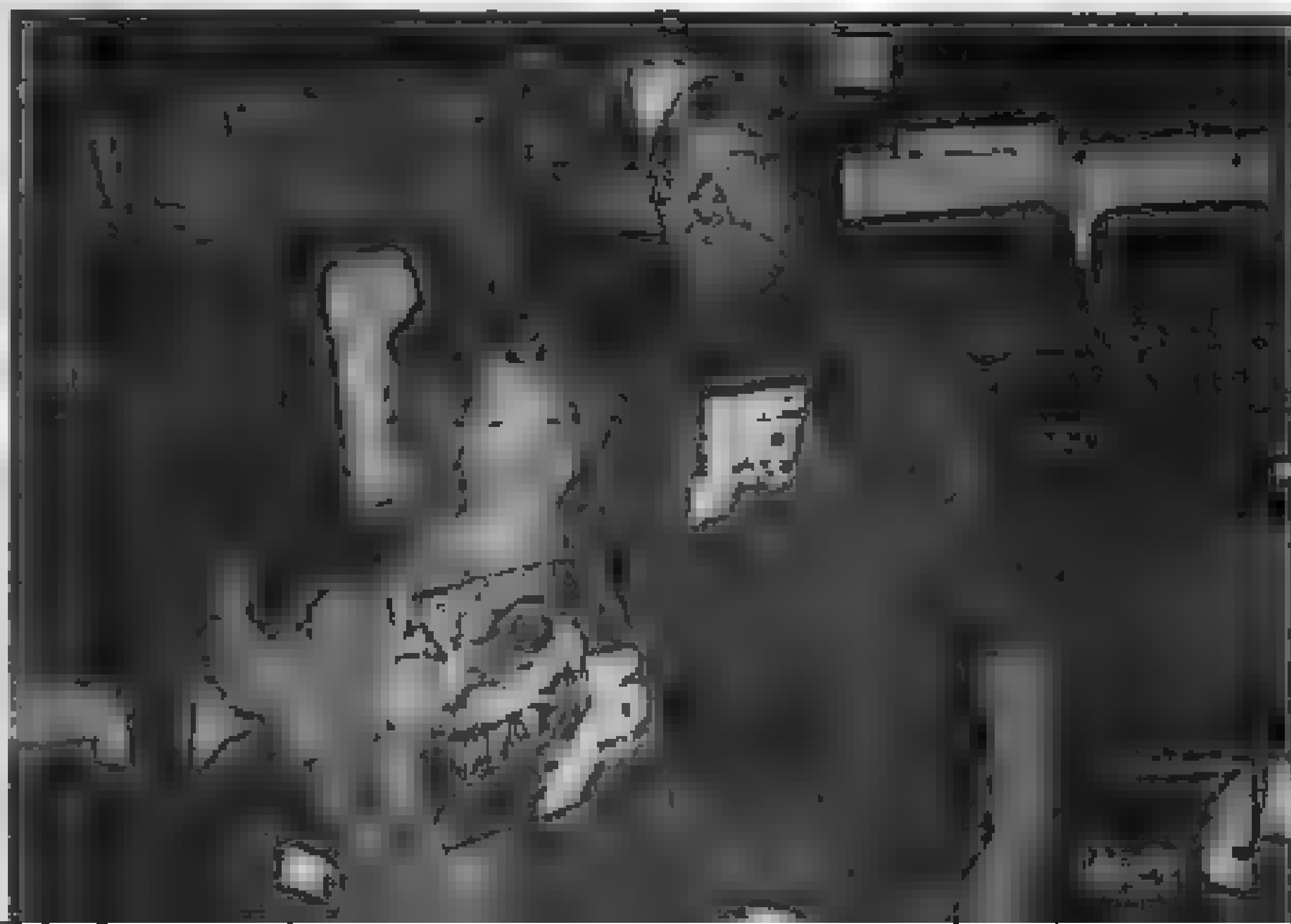
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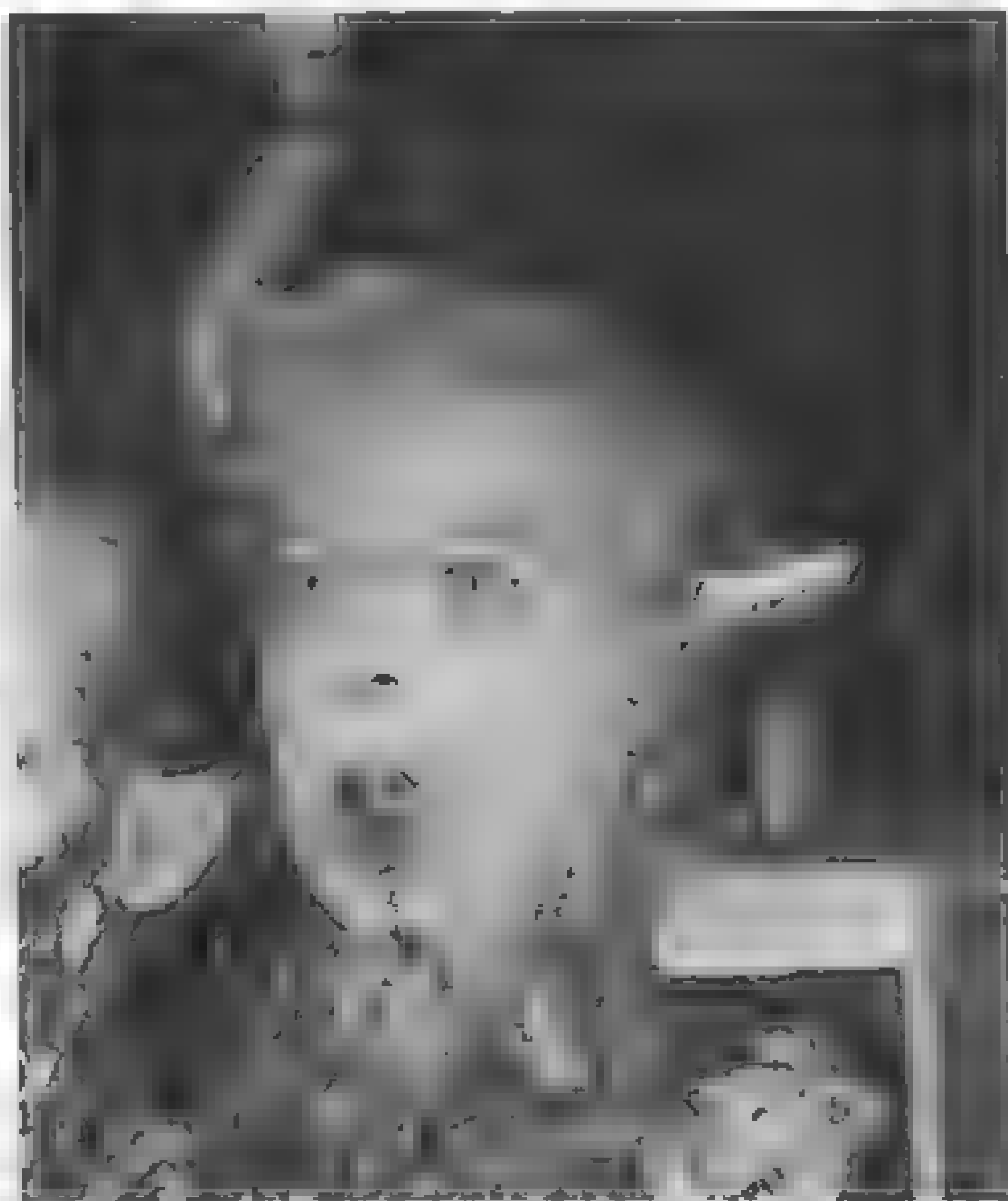
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A GATHERING OF THE TRIBES

"Memories of FantaCon 88"

BY DENNIS DANIEL

I was among my kin plain and simple. Many months had I waited for the joyful day to arrive. Many cross-country phone calls had I had with Chas and Pat, counting the days when we would be together in celebration of the genre we all hold most dear. Finally, it was upon us! FantaCon '88! Oh, Gory Day, thou hast finally shown itself before mine eyes! Fuckin-A! Yippee! Yahoo!

Gang, I've been to many a horror convention in my day, but FantaCon '88 was the grandest of all! Tom Savini to the left of me, Forry Ackerman to the right of me, horror fans all around me! I thought I was going to explode with pressure! There we all were, thousands of us, all of one mind, all of one soul! It was heavy.

We horror fans are not given many chances to celebrate en masse. We often have to settle for our small group of friends getting together once in awhile to shoot the horror shit, maybe watch a video. We are a lonely lot, not too many people enjoy watching guts pulled out, heads severed and eyes sliced. I, for one, am looked upon by many as a really bizarre dude. I know I'm not alone. I know there are many out there, just like me taking shit from all sides. Imagine then, what it must be like to be surrounded by nothing but horror fans. Imagine talking about nothing but horror for two solid days. Thus is what FantaCon was like! Intense!

Make no mistake about it, my DEEP RED brethren, FantaCon '88 was the horror event of the year! It's easy to see why. Tom Skulan and Company love the genre as much as we do. They're not a bunch of three-piece suited, hooray-for-me, fuck-you businessmen trying to milk us for all we're worth. These boys deliver the goods, baby! They know how to throw a horror party BIG TIME! They busted their asses for years getting the whole event together. They made sure we got our money's worth! I'm tellin' ya, it was a sight to see. The event was held in a giant convention center (unlike most shows which are held inside a hotel) with thousands of square feet! The minute you walked through the doors your eyes beheld this fuckin' TREMENDOUS room, filled to the brim with dealers! And these dealers were selling primo stuff. No STAR TREK, DR. WHO, STAR WARS bullshit here, my friends. There was nothing but horror goodies as far as the eye could see.

And the guests! Horror fans had many a chance to rub elbows with TOM SAVINI, STEVE PATINO, BRUCE SPAULDING FULLER, FORREST J. ACKERMAN, ROY FRUMKES and our own CHAS BALUN (those who gave a shit, shook my hand). There were writers aplenty, including TIM FERRANTE (a sweet guy), TONY TIMPONE (another sweetie), STANLEY WIATER and my bearded buddy, STEVE BISSETTE. There were also plenty of films to see, panels to attend and demonstrations to watch. It was Horror Heaven.



EDITORS' PANEL: TONY TIMPONE (FANGORIA), FORRY ACKERMAN (FAMOUS MONSTERS), CHAS. BALUN (DEEP RED) AND GARY SVEHLA (MIDNIGHT MARQUEE)



TOM SKULAN AND HANK JANSEN (CON COORDINATOR) WELL DONE LADS!



SAVINI PREMIERED HIS NEW "GRAND ILLUSTRATION" SET OF FX TRADING CARDS

There are two specific personal memories that I'd like to share with you. The first event that I'll never forget was a very special dinner. After the first day of the convention, a whole bunch of us horror hounds got to hang out with one another. We decided to eat at the restaurant across from the hotel. As we walked toward the restaurant I looked around at the assembled group. Chas and Pat Balun, Tony Timpone (editor of FANGO), Tim Ferrante (writer), Stan Winter (writer), Steve Bissette (illustrator/writer) there we all were, the horror elite getting a bite to eat. "You know," I said, "If a bomb hit us all right now, there'd be nobody left to write about horror for our publications!" (A pretty self-serving statement on my part, but what the hell it got a chuckle.) Needless to say, we had the time of our lives at dinner! I still get goose bumps thinking about it. If only I had recorded our conversation!

The second event was this huge panel discussion about horror films. There were about twelve of us! Sitting dead center of the table was good ol' Forry the world's oldest horror fan. He proceeded to tell a long, sad story about how he'd been turned down time and again by many different organizations in his efforts to find a permanent home for his amazing collection. As I listened, I got really pissed off! Here's a man who's devoted his life to writing about and preserving our horror heritage and he keeps getting doors slammed in his face! When he finished his story, I stood up. I looked at the crowd and said, "I don't know about all of you, but if it wasn't for Forry and FAMOUS MONSTERS I wouldn't be here! I appreciate you, Forry, and I want to thank you for being an inspiration to me!" I started to clap. Pretty soon the entire room was on their feet giving Forry a standing ovation. The look on his face is something I will never forget.

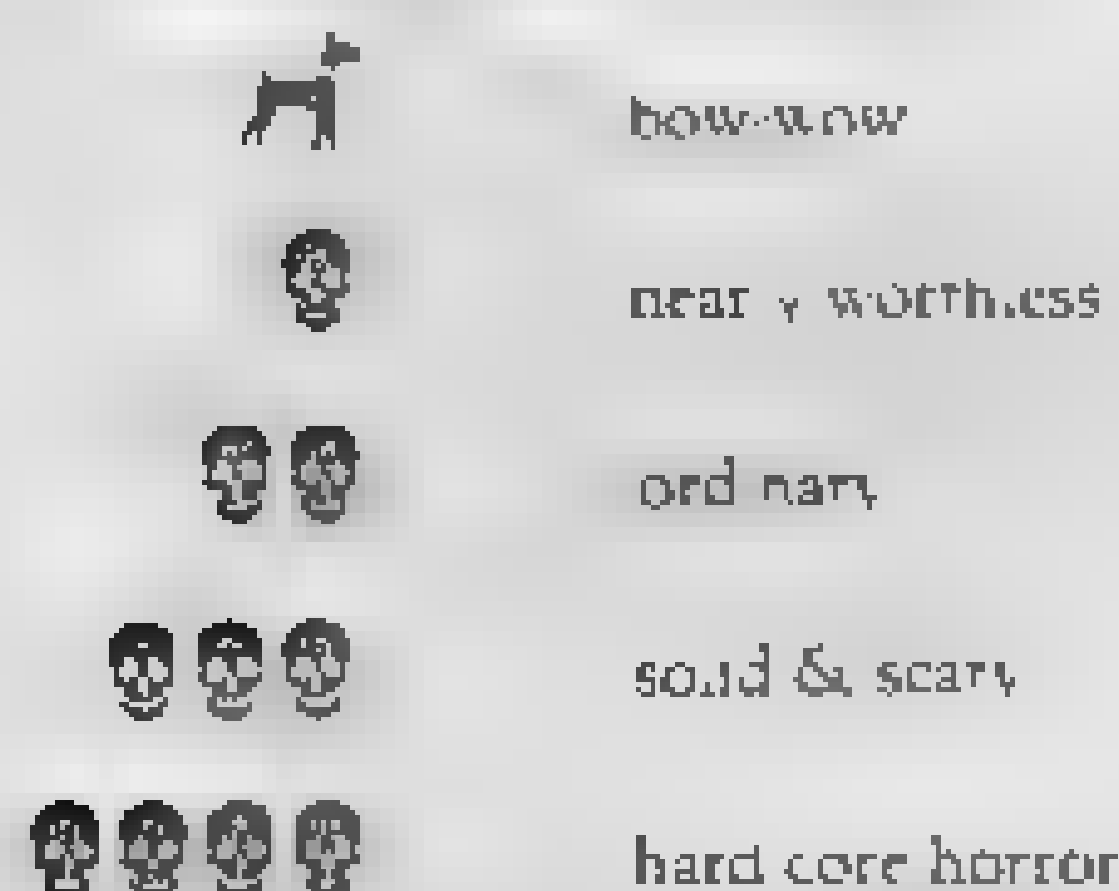
And, FantaCon '88 is something I will never forget. If you missed it, fear not! There's always '89! Thanks again Tom Skulan, for two of the most wonderful days of my life! Bravo!



COURTESY VONN REBERT

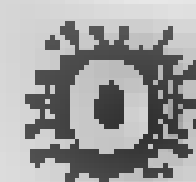
GORE SCOREBOARD

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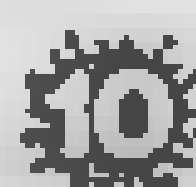


The Gore Score

This evaluation then deals with nothing but the **quantity** of blood, brains, guts and assorted precious bodily fluids spilled during the course of the film. It's quite simple really. *The Bad News Bears Go To Japan* would get a big fat zero in the Gore Score category while *Dr. Butcher M.D.* and *"Maniac"* would most like y receive juicy ones or tens.



Mary Poppins, *Dumbo* and *Terms of Endearment*



'*Bloodsucking Freaks*,' *"The Evil Dead"* and *"The Gates Of Hell"*

(CB) CHAS. BALUN (GG) GREG GOODSSELL, (GR) GRAHAM RAE, (JM) JOHN MARTIN, (DL) DAVID LAST, JR., (KG) KRIS GILPIN, (SB) STEVE BISSETTE

KILLING SPREE (1987)

d Tim Rutter



Amateur, backyard gorefest features abundant blood and guts but few brains. Mechanic suspects wife is doing the horizontal hooch with everybody in town, so he goes after 'em, reducing their numbers by mower, screw-driver, hammer and fan blade in several pleasingly repellent splatter sequences. There's also one terrific sight gag, a truly hilarious comic bit involving some imaginative handling of a well-known sexual euphemism. For gore-hounds and sexually paranoid airplane repairmen only.

(CB)

ALMOST HUMAN (1979)

d Umberto Lenzi

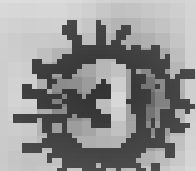
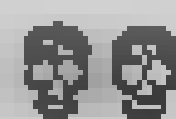


Surprisingly timid crime thriller from the cannibal man himself, Umberto (CANNIBAL FEROX, DOOMED TO DIE) Lenzi. A low-ranking Mafia hit man botches a kidnapping, then doublecrosses his partners and kills his hostage before being gassed down in agonizing, ultra slow motion by an intrepid police inspector. Lots of shootings, but no splatter, no squibs, no nothin'. Could safely play on network TV without cuts.

(CB)

BLOODY WEDNESDAY (1987)

d

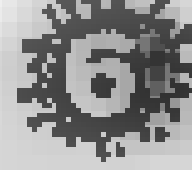


Obviously "inspired" by the notorious California McDonald Massacre, this timid little clunker never lives up to its loud promise. Unbalanced, heavily armed bozo sadist enters some fast food joint and blows 'em away. He gets shot, he's dead. The climactic gun battle happens just that fast. Surprisingly bloodless and tidy, almost polite. I wanted real meat in my Big Mac and flesh with my fries and whaddit I get—a Bigus Burger.

(CB)

NECROPOLIS (1987)

d Bruce Hickey

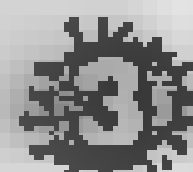
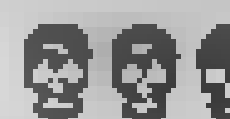


Psychic slat suckles six on Satan's spunk! Yep, a 300-year-old Dutch witch is re-incarnated as an ugly punk motorcyclist with a shabby haircut and too much eye makeup and grows six tits to feed her minions! I kid you not. Her psychic powers make people do bad things to themselves or one another, then gooey she oozes out of their heads and she licks 'em. Well, you can't blame this clunker for not trying. Satan's psychic sluttiness is played by the talent-barron LeeAnne Baker, who can neither act, dance nor ever appear even slightly menacing. Plenty of raggedy-assed FX work by Ed French and lots of ugly, ridiculous people making asses of themselves. A real triumph.

(CB)

DLATHROW GAMESHOW (1987)

d Mark Pirro

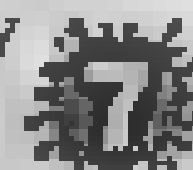


KSIX TV presents "Live or Die," a gameshow that gives condemned prisoners one last chance to beat the executioner. Some of the gags are actually pretty funny, including one rather inspired bit with a Mafia boss trying

to remain unaroused as a stripper performs the "Dance of the Seven Boners." See, his dick is wired with 50,000 volts, so if he gets firm, he gets fried. Sort of like a poor guy's *RUNNING MAN*, though the concept grows tiresome rapidly. Semi-funny *BLUE VELVET* parody and some clever sketches under the end credits provide requisite chuckles. (CB)

BIZARRE RITUALS: DANCES SACRED AND PROFANE

d Mark and Dan Jurey

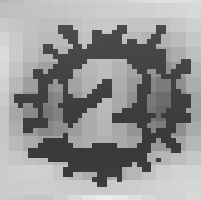


Move over Dr. Frances B. Gross, the central figure in this real-life documentary is Dr. Charles Gatewood, photographer and anthropologist. Instead of the barren jungle outback, Gatewood takes his camera and explores the nether regions of contemporary American life: Tattoo clubs, biker bars, gay bath houses, the Hellfire Club, S & M parlors, nudist colonies, the Mardi Gras. But Gatewood is far too close to his subject matter to be just another freak photographer such as Diane Arbus. You know the type, or maybe are the type—bearding, bearded, bespectacled, forever rubbing ring and pinky finger into his mustache while discussing methods of

"research." The real star of **BIZARRE RITUALS**—**FANCES SACRID AND PROFANE** is Fakir Masafar, a Caucasian Canadian business man in his forties whose hobby is jabbing sharp metal objects into his skin. And Fakir means business—nails through nipples, waist reduced to 15 inches, can be pierced on the most delicate parts of the body. Masafar willingly submits to this play—that would make a **HELLRAISER** Cenote to protest in phdoly. Believing himself to be a reincarnation of an American Indian, Masafar reenacts the **MAN CALLED HORSE**—stab with spikes through the chest and hangs from a tree for the benefit of the sweating appreciative Gatewood. Sick known more widely by the honey-tongued second half of its title, **BIZARRE RITUALS** is now on video and competition with the **FACIS OF DEATH/SHOCKING ASIA** market. This leisurely-paced shockumentary spends a great deal of time justifying itself, so time to teach the audience about the extremes of human behavior and what we can learn from it. The filmmakers don't have that **DR. D.P.** score Mince-type flick guaranteed to make the viewers simultaneously queasy and fascinated, rubbing red and pink fingers through their delicious 12 minutes. (GG)

THE TORMENTORS

d B Eagle



With the arrival of Costa Gavras' **LETRAYAL**—any anti-exploitation film with the theme of white supremacy is bound to resurface. Hopefully, this wall-to-wall flick like **THE TORMENTORS** off the recent video rental rack where this twisted little gem was found. I see during the late '60s and early '70s when **THE TORMENTORS** was filmed, the counter culture was in its prime. The self-righteousness of the love and peace hippies turned many followers off who left to pursue the opposite end of the political spectrum of the American Nazi Party. Offering the highs of hate and personal expression through the oppression of others.

THE TORMENTORS seems to be the only such film to have capitalized on this short-lived trend. Done in such a manner that only the most mercenary can accomplish one wonders if the film makers were "on the level." The director's name offers a clue. **THE TORMENTORS** of the title refer to a small group of brownish-red Southern Californians who had themselves as the **Fourth Reich**. Spending their days robbing banks and disrupting hippie peace rallies, they relax in an isolated mountain retreat. A wimpy insurance salesman decides to infiltrate the Reichers after they rape and strangle his blonde fiancée with a Swiss-tux armband during a host. Once inside the group, he meets and falls in love with a race Aryan girl who hates he Nazis just as much as he does. She just hates around them as a spearhead for a bigger and better thing. The Fourth Reichers believe he is a prophetic figure called the Messiah, who dresses like Jesus and goes around saying things like "material possessions are just not where it's at, man!" They view him as the competition for the hearts and souls of Southern Californians. Bad film in many ensues as we watch this inner reject from a Sunday school play being chased by the Nazis, dressed in full regalia, smashing his head against the hood of the car and chasing him on foot along a mountain climb, ride as a jet airplane crests the spotless blue sky. An image this dense obtains similar scenes by **Bayer**. Not that any of these scenes are intentional. **THE TORMENTORS'** chief draw is its camp value. Incredibly busy acting sets, and dramatic hammer home all the pertinent aspects of the story—cat films, Nazi style language, big tits, Nazi fetishism, you name it. Tedious and contrived the feel of self-made pornography. As it would take a Lily Williams in a low-cut German Hausfrau dress to wander in and say "all this talk about racialization of the white European race is just a fancy excuse for you people to have an natural sex with each other." to blow this movie's cover.

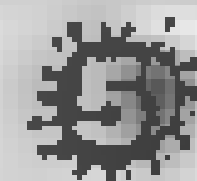
In spite of this, **THE TORMENTORS** does have an important underlying message. Namely, don't settle for good movies when there are bad movies this good. (GG)

976-EVIL

(aka **HORRORSCOPE**)

(1988)

d Robert England (Freddy the K')



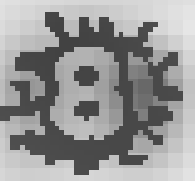
Oh, nervous wimp. **Iliax** (Stephen Geoffreys of **FRIGHT NIGHT**), a pal of his cousin Spike (Patrick O'Leary), who rides a Harley motorcycle and has a beautiful girlfriend, Susan (Liane Deane). So, **Iliax** plays a "horror scope" phone line and is soon embraced by the powers of evil which give him the chance of revenge on his overbearing religious fanatic mother, a gang called the Parricidas who pick on him at every turn and Spike himself. Susan **Iliax** grows into a goddess, don't ask where you've heard that one before, and is slaying unrepentant members and making Freddy the Cuckoo with claims. (For example, after cutting off the hand of a gang member, he holds it up in front of the camera and says, "Now that's a dead man's hand.") He also enters a mad gear after tearing the hearts from two more gang members, asking if he can get into the game with a pair of hearts, what the hearts still beat in his hands. But it is only when he accidentally unleashes an attack of giant spiders on Liane (who is killed) that Spike decides himself to combat the demon whom he'd always had to protect her. The last 20 minutes of the film feature some good FX (the gross opening up to reveal her) but the rest doesn't really cut it. The make-up on **Iliax** isn't really scary, and by the time he gets around to killing his zealot mother, we have lost all sympathy for him, an important flaw in **Leibon's** script. Kevin Yummers FX are good, though, including a scene where **Iliax's** mother is discovered being eaten by her cats and the dispassionate of one of the gang members called **Atheist** (it's names bad!) on a decorative path.

flick above a cinema. Nice try, England. The next time leave out the Freddy rip-off footage, huh? (GR)

DON'T OPEN THE WINDOW aka THE LIVING DEAD AT THE MANCHESTER MORGUE

(1976)

d Jorge Grau



This extremely gory zombie epic was originally released in Europe back in 1974 as **THE LIVING DEAD AT THE MANCHESTER MORGUE**. The Spanish/Italian co-production was filmed entirely on location in Manchester, England. It's a semi-ripoff of George A. Romero's cult classic, **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**, made in 1968, again using the effects of uncontrolled radiation to cause the dead to become "undead" and rise from their graves or anywhere else for that matter. There's one particularly gross scene of a freshly sewn-up autopsy corpse come back to life, wearing only bandages on his head and private parts and sporting a long, clamped-together incision that runs from out under his stomach all the way up to his chest. However, this film does have a few original ideas of its own (like having the hero killed and returning back to life seeking vengeance on the person responsible for his demise), plus it benefits from being made in gorgeous gory color (Romero's film was shot in black and white) as well as containing some of the bloodiest moments in horror cinema. Although retitled and heavily cut for its American and Canadian debut in the late '70s, most of the graphic violence was trimmed. Zombie fans should definitely check this gory masterpiece out. Makeup effects by the great Ginerio (ZOMBIE, DR. BUTCHER) De Rosa. With Christine Galt. (DI)





Dario Argento OPERA

OPERA (1987)
d: Dario Argento



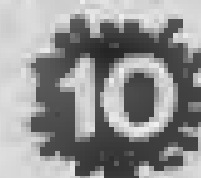
Giallo gourmets choking on the diet of stodgy TV movies currently coming out of Italy can take heart; Dario Argento serves up only the choicest cinematic cuts in his latest film, OPERA. This typically offbeat thriller centres on Betty (Cristina Marsillach), a young understudy who becomes the predictable overnight sensation when diva Cececova takes the injunction to "break a leg" rather too literally on the opening night of a new production of Verdi's MACBETH (a story traditionally associated with disaster due to the involvement of three witches—Whispers, Tears and Darkness?). Sure enough, one of Betty's biggest fans is a loony who demonstrates his devotion to her by staging the deaths of her friends and colleagues before her very eyes, which he pins open to ensure that she misses none of the fun. OPERA earns its "9" on the Gore Scoreboard due to the efforts of Sergio Stivaletti, who puts the "scar" into La Scala with the following: a stabbing

through the jaw (Argento's voracious camera diving into the unfortunate victim's mouth to catch his skewered tongue wiggling around); a girl who swallows a vital piece of evidence only to have it hacked out of her esophagus by the scissor-wielding maniac; and, best of all, a slow-motion bullet through the head which caps the most suspenseful sequence in the picture in shattering style. Here is a passage that Argento buffs will rank alongside the legendary double murder set piece opening to SUSPIRIA. Of course, Argento's reputation rests on more than the severity of his murder scenes. The expected psycho-sexual underpinning to the violence is present and correct in S&M flashbacks that represent Argento's darkest musings yet on this score; and it goes without saying, every stylish frame of OPERA packs state-of-the-art high technology. Argento and cinematographer Ronnie Taylor rewrite the rulebooks with nonstop camera pyrotechnics that make the celebrated louna-crane sequence in TENEBRAE/UNSANE look like one of those Lucio

Fulci patented "nail-the-camera-to-the-spot-while-the-living-dead-chow-down" shots. Argento's lens vibrates, mists over or zooms in on minute detail as the plot demands. The camera loops the loop, weaves fluidly in and out of obstacles to follow Betty on epic tracking shots and ultimately divebombs the audience in the opera house to render the point of view of a vengeful, telepathic crow (only Argento could get away with this stuff) during a show stopping, eye-popping climax which recalls the "terrorism in the aisles" of DEMONS. Even now, Argento is not finished, following up with a five-minute recap of his previous film PHENOMENA/ CREEPERS and a final twist that Verdi's on the ridiculous. Like PHENOMENA, OPERA boasts an eclectic soundtrack—former Goblin Claudio Simonetti, Rolling Stone Bill Wyman, Brian Eno and a heavy metal combo known as Steel Grave join Verdi and Puccini. Marsillach's costars are Ian Charleson, Urbano Barberini and Argento's ex, Daria Nicolodi. Just when you thought it was safe to give up on Italian horror, Argento delivers the goods. OPERA is baroque, berserk, bloody and beautiful. And, it's got squirming brains, too. What more could you want?

(JM)

NEKROMANTIK (1987)
d: Jorg Buttgerreit



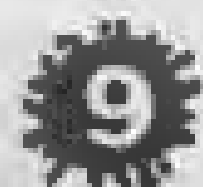
Director Jorg Buttgerreit called this film "corpse-fucking art." Add the words "perverse," "stomach-churning," and "taboo-trashing" and you will have a clearer idea about this piece of sick celluloid. Clive Barker would be proud. Make no mistake about it, this film definitely isn't out to pander to Christian censor groups like the MPAA or BBFC. One of the first scenes shows us the charming sight of a woman who has been cut in two in a car crash, whilst her male companion lies in the wreckage with his eye decorating his cheek. When a film starts out like this, you know it isn't going to fuck around pandering to cinematic taboos, prudes in the audi-

ence or, indeed, good taste. Enter Rob (Daktari Lorenz) onto the accident scene. He works with a firm called Joe's Streetcleaning Agency, who clean up after the scene of accidents (a sort of mobile mortuary). Joe steals the boyfriend's eye and takes it home to put in a jar to delight his wife Betty (Beatrice M). It soon becomes apparent that neither Rob nor Betty are very sane. Rob keeps jars of formaldehyde containing tongues, fetuses, eyes, etc. and Betty bathes in water contaminated by blood. But it is only when Rob gets the opportunity to steal a corpse that died in an accident that things begin to really get out of hand. He takes the corpse home (much to Betty's delight) and then takes it to bed with his wife and himself, covering the end of a broom with a condom to substitute for a penis. His wife begins to make love regularly to the corpse, reading to it in her bed when it isn't hung up on the wall. (I don't think Rob and Betty would get many visitors, somehow.) When Rob is fired from his job, Betty takes this as the last straw and runs off with the corpse (telling Rob she doesn't want to waste the rest of her life with him!), which turns Rob into a frustrated necrophiliac with no sexual outlet. He goes to watch a gore film which isn't real enough for him, then goes to a prostitute who he tries to fuck on a tombstone in a local cemetery. When she laughs at his inability to get it up, he kills her and gets it up for her corpse. Ugh. When the cemetery caretaker discovers Rob the next morning with the corpse, Rob grabs his spade and cleaves half his head off. (I thought for one horrible moment he was going to make it with the gardener's corpse.) Rob realizes he cannot live without Betty and, after taking a bath in which he substitutes human intestines for soap, decides to off himself in a way which will stick in your mind long after the credits roll. Indeed, the whole film is thought provoking. It only resorts to CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST "why am I watching this film" levels in one scene which involves the on-screen

killing of a rabbit. So, if you get the chance, see this film, but do not be expecting a "safe" horror. This is hard-core stuff, indeed. And, if you're British (like me), you can pretty much forget about seeing this film ever, let alone in a cut version. You know why. (GR)

THE HUNTING PARTY (1971)

d: Don Medford



United Artists' nihilistic gore western about rape, adultery, and man's violence toward his fellow man is sure to please fellow blood brothers with its explicit violence. This is one mean mother of a film, folks! Outlaw Oliver Reed and his gang kidnap gorgeous Candice Bergen (wife of cattle baron, Gene Hackman), whom Reed mistakes for a school teacher. He tells Bergen that he abducted her so she can teach him how to read and write. Candice quickly points out to Ollie that she is no school teacher and suggests he let her go immediately before her powerful and influential hubby finds out what happened. Ollie just shrugs off the warning and proceeds to rape Candy. Bergen realizes Reed is better in the sack than her brutal and impotent husband. Later in the film, she is seen by her husband to actually be enjoying being with Reed and the gang; in doing so, she seals her own death warrant. When Hackman first learns of his wife's kidnapping while aboard his own private train (equipped with bordello), he is justifiably upset. Nobody, but nobody, steals one of Hackman's possessions and gets away with it. Especially, when the stolen item happens to be his beautiful wife. Punishment is in order and the punishment is to be... death! So, Hackman and his hunting buddies, each equipped with a brand new Sharps rifle complete with telescopic scopes (a gift from wealthy Hackman to entice his friends to join him in the search of live human game—an offer they readily accept), form the ultimate hunting party and leave the train in search of Reed and his men.

What follows is a new high in screen butchery and excess as Reed's men are slaughtered in an orgy of carnage that easily outrivals **THE WILD BUNCH** and **SOLDIER BLUE** for on-screen, wallowing in bloodletting. Such explicit scenes as Reed's men getting the back of their heads blown off or having their bare stomachs and backs riddled with bullet holes are intercut with overly bloody bullet hits. Most of the bloody action is shown in loving slow motion, especially the famous 'waterhole' sequence. L.Q. Jones also has his throat cut by badass Hackman. Finally, when only Reed and Bergen are left, Hackman kills his unfaithful wife first. Yes, women before men, that's my motto! He shoots Candice right in the crotch. No, friends, I'm not kidding. Hackman does make a mess of the front of her dress below her belly button. Didn't I say this film set new heights in screen mayhem earlier? Anyway, Hackman then kills Reed bloodily and sits down in the desert sand. Having used up his water supply while stalking his prey through the hot, blistering desert, he closes his eyes and waits for the scorching death to take him. His vengeance is complete. This is an extremely brutal and bloody film with great action, good acting and photography. The excellent makeup effects by Jose Antonio Sanchez (who also did the FX for **FIRE-STARTER**) and Don Medford's slick direction of action sequences make this a film to be reckoned with no matter how shallow the plot might be. Check it out. Riz Ortolani did the music. (DL)

SLAVE GIRLS FROM BEYOND INFINITY

d: Ken Dixon



Great shit flick title from new Urban Classics distributors starts with a buxom blonde beauty being stalked by an alien with an optical FX gun, then doesn't go much of anywhere after that. Two slave girls crash on an island planet ruled by a bad guy who keeps a head collection on his walls. This quickie, Z-grade

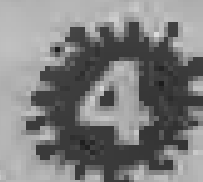
production (they forgot to spin the stars in the background as seen through the windows of a spaceship as it's careening through space) then becomes a twist on **THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME** as the hunter tracks them down in his jungle (though the girls still take time out to sit and have a couple of conversations, bringing the action to a fever pitch). The acting on the part of the slave women is really...well,

who cares, since they're real lookers? And the dialogue's along the lines of, "If you get yourselves killed out there, you'll have me to answer to!" With one nude sequence half way through, the ads scream, "Big movie, big production, big girls!" Then they went and (for a B flick) took themselves too seriously. A big mistake. (KG)



DEMONWARP (1988)

d: Emmet Alston



From the prolific and ungifted hand of John (GHOULIES, TROLL, FRIDAY THE 13TH, PART VII) Buechler comes this mind-numbing, dreadful story about Bigfoot creatures being controlled by aliens. What a concept! The shaggy beasts are really giant mutant,

steroid-fed Ghoulies in fright wigs and they'd better watch out cause good ol' boy George Kennedy and a cast of forgettables are after their asses! They show way too much of the creature too soon and things only get worse, climaxing in a frightfully bad confrontation with a painfully bogus trash can monster/alien and his minions. Really out there, man. (CB)

AUTOPSY/MACCHIE SOLARI (1974)

d: Armando Crispino



Suspenseful, effective Argento inspired thriller available on the Prism label, not to be confused with **AUTOPSY**, which is absolutely wretched and to be avoided. This one opens with rapid-fire, harrowing glimpses of suicides, leading us into the morgue to meet a death-obsessed female doctor (Mimsy Farmer) whose research into faked suicides (Y'know, murder) has proved a bit overwhelming. Midway through an autopsy, she's seeing the corpses walking, fucking, and making passes at her. Her hallucinations and disturbing obsessions make for one unstable heroine,

whose doubts over an apparent suicide victim sets up the Argento-esque mystery that becomes pretty engaging once it's in gear. The clinical details of forensic science and the unflinchingly graphic preoccupation with death and the dead (without becoming gratuitous) lends this convoluted tale quite an edge, despite the occasional giallo absurdities. Crispino's direction is crisp and competent, enhanced by Carlo Carlini's cinematography and Ennio Morricone's score, building to a vivid climax and final image. It's not up to Argento or Mario Bava's best, but, nonetheless, a solid night's **DEEP RED** entertainment. Costar Ray Lovelock played the hero in **THE LIVING DEAD AT THE MANCHESTER MORGUE**/the same year. (SB)



ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY S. ANDERSON

A Very Merry X-Mas
To You All.

ITS EVERY YEAR
AT CHRISTMAS TIME
THAT I FEEL LIKE
A **BIÇ KID...**

BUT WE
ALWAYS GET
TURKEY!

PLASMA
TYPE
O

FROM
"The
CURCH" 88
xxx

ILLUSTRATION BY CURCHAIN SINGH